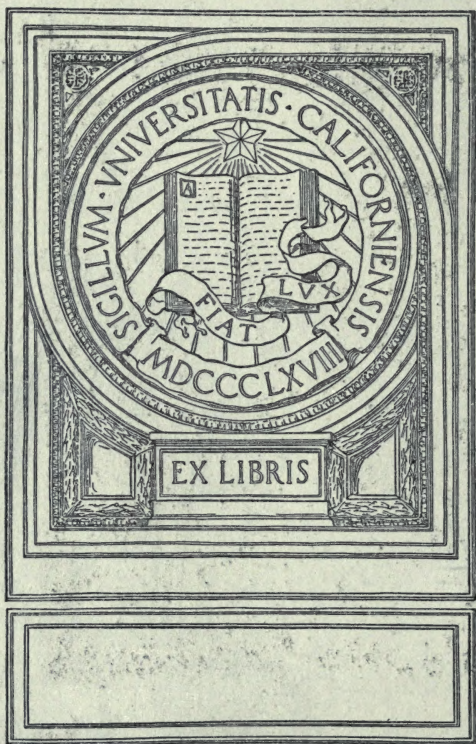










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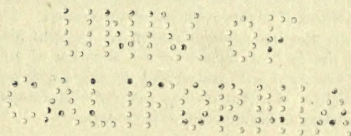
Letters and Journals, with Memoir

BY

ROBERT A. WATSON, M.A., D.D.,

and

ELIZABETH S. WATSON



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## P R E F A C E.

FOURTEEN years have elapsed since Mr. Gilfillan's death. He is still a striking figure in the memory of thousands who heard him speak, and a power in the life of many who were informed and stimulated by his written word. Those who knew him will find something at least in the present volume either fresh or freshly set. Others, to whom his "History of a Man" and various bits of autobiography scattered here and there are unknown or inaccessible, may now learn the main course of his life. The material furnished is authentic and intimate—letters to close friends, and portions of a journal full of reminiscence. It will be seen that Mr. Gilfillan speaks for himself, and the confessedly fictitious element in the "History of a Man" is corrected as if by his own pen. At the close, one and another, men of distinction, will say briefly what they knew of Gilfillan, and acknowledge the debt owing to him by all who love literature and care for religion. Many other tributes might have been gathered; but it was desirable to keep the record within moderate lines.



Gilfillan had many devoted friends—no man more—he had also his enemies, his mistaken partisans, and more mistaken revilers. Because he loved and led the people and spoke straight to them as he knew and as he felt, he was once called a charlatan. It is an accusation that will not be repeated now. Gilfillan's work was cast into the furrow and has borne its fruit. He helped to create modern religious thought throughout the English-speaking world. He took part in every battle for freedom that he counted a straight battle, winning even when he seemed to lose. He praised the worthy to his own hurt, and aided the struggling to his own confusion. His great humane heart was at once the making and the dissipation of his power. He was beloved everywhere by the intelligent plain man who was not a bigot, and by the earnest young soul that felt the sting of doubt or knew the poetic longing: to these, indeed, he was a priest.

But if ever there was a minister of religion without priestcraft, it was Gilfillan. Ecclesiastical intrigue and pride were far from him. And if ever there was a man who could not abide the intellectual prig it was he.

Warm acknowledgments are due to many who have interested themselves in this publication, and contributed matter which has all been of service, though it may not be directly used. Mrs. Dobell; Mrs. Smith, Whitehaven, sister of Thomas Aird;

Mrs. Jefferson, Ulverston ; Miss Robertson of Irvine ; the Rev. Dr. Blair, Dunblane ; Mr. Allan, Sunderland ; the Rev. Dr. Baxter, Kirkcaldy ; the Rev. John C. Johnston, Dunoon ; Mr. A. C. Lamb, Dundee ; Mr. Henry Prain, Longforgan, long an office-bearer of School Wynd Church ; Mr. John Mair, M.A., Librarian of the United Presbyterian Church, and Mr. A. H. Millar, F.S.A. Scot., Dundee, have contributed valuable letters, reminiscences, and other help. Mr. David Lambie, Viewforth Street, Dundee, has given assistance throughout of the most important kind, relieving the editors in many ways. The tributes of Dr. Hutchison Stirling, John Leng, Esq., M.P., and Dr. Joseph Parker add greatly to the interest of the book. Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll has kindly read the proofs of the volume, and advised as to various points.

The work has been undertaken at the request of Mrs. Gilfillan who gave the use of manuscripts ; and this memorial volume is affectionately inscribed to her.

DUNDEE, *November*, 1892.





# CONTENTS.

PAGE

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| The First Forty Years, . . . . . | I |
|----------------------------------|---|

## CHAPTER I.

|                                            |   |
|--------------------------------------------|---|
| THE VILLAGE, THE MANSE, THE PARENTS, . . . | 3 |
|--------------------------------------------|---|

## CHAPTER II.

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| RELIGION AND NATURE, . . . . . | 19 |
|--------------------------------|----|

## CHAPTER III.

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| THE STUDENT, 1825-1835, . . . . . | 31 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

## CHAPTER IV.

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| EARLY MINISTRY, 1835-1850, . . . . . | 56 |
|--------------------------------------|----|

## CHAPTER V.

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| EARLIER WRITINGS, . . . . . | 80 |
|-----------------------------|----|

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Friendships and Letters, . . . . . | 113 |
|------------------------------------|-----|

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Journals, . . . . . | 239 |
|---------------------|-----|

---

|                                       | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| The Last Twenty-Five Years, . . . . . | 387  |

## CHAPTER VI.

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| PROGRESS OF THOUGHT, . . . . . | 389 |
|--------------------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER VII.

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| PUBLIC LIFE, 1862-1878, . . . . . | 422 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|

## CHAPTER VIII.

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| THE CLOSE—CHARACTERISTICS, . . . . . | 441 |
|--------------------------------------|-----|

---

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Appendix, . . . . . | 459 |
|---------------------|-----|

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| List of Publications, . . . . . | 462 |
|---------------------------------|-----|

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Index, . . . . . | 468 |
|------------------|-----|

7.

THE FIRST FORTY YEARS.



NOTE.—When the *History of a Man*, or briefly, *The History* is mentioned, the reference is to Mr. Gilfillan's own book, which is partly autobiographical.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE VILLAGE—THE MANSE—THE PARENTS.

SCOTLAND is a country of memories. Everywhere the glens and uplands have their association with national history; the villages and towns have names they cherish of poet or patriot, metaphysician or divine, some man who wrote a song, reasoned out a criticism, governed a dependency, or maintained a protest. The austere norland promontory is full of birthplaces and graves; wherever one goes, one is in touch with the life of many generations. Among the rest, the village of Comrie, and the Strath of the Earn, are poorer than some. Comrie does not boast the usual crop of poets; but she has her share in Scottish history, and she has George Gilfillan.

The modern traveller, glancing westward as the train flies along the skirts of the Ochils down the last incline to Perth, sees Crieff set in full view upon a low mound in front of the Grampians. Just out of sight, within the first foldings of the mountain land, lies Comrie, birthplace of George Gilfillan, awaiting the closer touch of the world. The railway pushes a few miles farther this year, and invades the basin of the Earn; it makes an outpost where, two thousand years ago, the Roman came to halt before the natural

fortress of the Cymry. Soon there may be a change in the aspect of the region. As yet, however, it breathes of that past time when the weavers of Comrie made their "plaiden cloth" and tartan, and the women in the farm-houses and cottages span the "harn yarn" and the "oo." The old-world air lingers about the low streets that lace the three waters of Comrie. One looks to see a weaver come to a door; one listens for the click of the shuttle; the village has a mark upon it of the old seceders, in a sort of New England steadiness and subdued thrifty comfort. It is a clean, composed, orderly place, half Highland, half of the Lowlands, with its elements of interest for the student of Scottish history and abounding charm for the lover of the Scots' land. By three ways the voices of the mountain wilderness reach Comrie, and eastward it has easy access to the vale of Strathmore, to the great artery of the country and the world at large. In "the subsidence of the Highland feudal system" (see the Duke of Argyll's interesting book), there must have been a gathering of industrious persons in the haugh of the Earn; we find traces of them about the early eighteenth century; and toward 1770, when the Appin region and others sent out shiploads of emigrants to "the plantations" of a new world, Comrie would seem to have kept a fair standard of prosperity. The weavers sat under their own thatched roofs, cultivated their own potato plots, and grew steadily in number until this century was well forward. Even in 1834 there were two hundred of them, but about that time there was a great outgoing from the glens, and the population of the parish began to fall. Now the "oo mill" stands silent beside its dam; all the looms are gone save two or three; in

the glens the stones of dismantled dwellings are grass-grown—the children born within them have children of their own grown to men and women on Canadian farms.

In the year 1791 there came to Comrie a young minister of Scotland's earliest dissenting church—if dissenting be at all a right name for a company of people who were separated from the national Church because they wished liberty to choose their pastors, and to have men of fire and fervour. It seems a strange thing now to create dissent in this way. It was done, however, and the Associate Synod formed—in reality a rekindling of the Covenanting spirit, never extinct, never cold, under its gathering peat. The Associate Synod became the Secession Church, and the nurse of the free church principle. A small and struggling communion, it held with touching insistence to the idea of culture. The ministers should be all university men, the pulpits that were claimed for warmth should not be sacrificed to mere declaiming and ignorant zeal. So the little groups of seceders had to wait until ministers were trained; some of them waited a whole generation, sharing the services of a minister with other groups at greater or less distance. The cause in Comrie was associated with one at Greenloaning, thirteen miles across the southern ridge, with one at Kinkell, seventeen miles away, with Crieff, finally, for several years. Toward the end of last century a Mr. Barlas was the minister of Crieff and Comrie until, at last, it became possible for the sixty-five members in the upper Strathearn region to have "a man" of their own. They chose Samuel Gilfillan, who was a popular probationer and had two other calls. By act of Synod—which, in those days,



used paternal authority and interpreted the mind of providence with quaint decisiveness—his lot was cast for him in Comrie, and there, in April of the year 1791, he was ordained, the congregation having been in existence for more than fifty years.

On the second day of that same April month, Mirabeau died over in Paris, and was buried on the fourth. During the following ten days the French cauldron hissed and steamed to its overflow. In England the man called John Wesley had just ended his labours, Burke was at the height of his fame, Hazlitt, a boy of thirteen, had written his first thesis. It was a notable time in the history of Europe and of man, but in one Scottish village the great affair was the "settlement" of Samuel Gilfillan.

He was the son of a small shopkeeper in the village of Bucklyvie, and with the character of his parents we seem to come to an end of family traditions on that side. The father was "a man of uncommon sagacity and controversial acumen; almost a republican in opinions," fond of reading and also of talking. The minister of Comrie, in describing him once to a friend, thought it necessary to speak of his father's religious life declining in his latter days, "owing to his being too often engaged in controversy, which makes the life of religion to evaporate." As to this, there may be two opinions; there is left with us an impression of a vigorous Scottish radical, a man of good parts and sincere religious faith. "My mother," writes Samuel Gilfillan, "was a woman of great piety and discretion, but of a quick temper, and at some times susceptible of gloomy impressions." She died, her husband married again, and the son seems to have been separated

from home influences, until he formed ties of his own. Curiously enough he, like his own son George, was the youngest of a numerous family, with a gap between him and the next in age. His education, too, followed a similar course. He went to Glasgow University, gathered a large amount of general information, developed some aptitude for languages, and a great appetite for literature, and became in many respects, an attractive sort of fellow; not a genius, yet a remarkable man, with gifts approaching genius—a fine presence, a buoyant, expansive temper, a simple, warm heart, and as a minister, no little power of engaging utterance, and affectionate sympathy. “He was frank to excess—guile had been forgotten in his composition; he had a childlike gaiety and warmth of manner from which he rose gently into dignity. He was full of talk, and especially of anecdote and allusion, and had a knack, altogether his own, of bringing in his religious views.” His pulpit work furnished many volumes, and a book on the Sabbath ran into eleven editions. As a preacher, he was serious, always animated, sometimes vehement, as the preachers of that day were apt to be; few, however, possessed “the inexpressible charm, the *naïveté*, the power of adapting his discourse to every little incident which occurred in the history of his audience, every smallest surge in its stream. He stood up before his people . . . to converse, on their level, solemnly yet easily, about the matters of their eternity, and as the conversation went on he allowed himself the widest range, gathering illustrations from every remarkable aspect of the sky above, or any singular incident below; here quoting a verse of poetry, there an

anecdote from his multifarious stores, here again snatching a shaft from the newspapers of the day, watching the while every countenance, and obliging everyone to return the eager glance; and doing all this with such perfect mastery, and in such evident good faith, as to secure undivided attention."

The description is taken from an article of George Gilfillan's, first published in *Hogg's Instructor*, December, 1848, and reprinted in the complete edition of "The Galleries" as a sketch of Dr. Anderson. It is in some respects more apt, more picturesque than corresponding passages in "The History of a Man" or "Remoter Stars." The less graphic yet carefully tender biography prepared by James Gilfillan of Stirling, touches more definitely on some points, and in nothing contradicts the warm, vivid portraiture of George. We see their father in his weakness and power, a soul quick to respond and quick to seize; not original in the larger sense, yet somewhat before his time. His papers in the *Christian Magazine*, signed "Leumas," were eagerly read by many all over Scotland—the uncles of Hugh Miller, for example. (See "My Schools and Schoolmasters.") He exerted himself too, in some later years, in planting village libraries about the Perthshire Highlands, and, altogether, though he was scarcely ever quite out of sight of Comrie, he enjoyed no small measure of popularity and usefulness. "The patriarchal preacher," says his son, "died out among the Swiss mountains, with Oberlin, and in Scotland, with Dr. Joseph MacIntyre, of Glen Orchy, and Samuel Gilfillan, of Comrie."

So far, the father and his work. He found a bride in the Crieff manse, and in 1793, Rachel Barlas came

up to Comrie to keep house on fifty pounds a-year. He was thirty-one, handsome, popular, full of energy; she was twenty-two, comely, prudent, and kind, a woman of healthy nature and cheerful pious heart. They lived together thirty-three years, had twelve children, eight of whom grew up, and the annual stipend never reached the hundred. There were "ekes" of course; the minister's garden had to supply a good deal, like other gardens; farmers would send in meal and "drive peats;" Comrie abounds in wood, and native cloth was cheap; still, it must have been tight work, for we may be quite sure *The Christian Magazine* did not help much. Yet all went with homely dignity, as in many another manse; sons had education and were put out in the world, the minister got some, at least, of the new books and periodicals he craved, and even contrived to "give out for printing" to the extent of a few pounds now and then. How much of this came back is not known, but a balance-sheet for one year was unearthed a while ago by the present minister of the church, the Rev. William Hall, and from that one may learn several curious facts. It is for 1803, when there may have been five children, and the income was £62, 14s. od., all told. The outlay for clothes was £7, 3s. 4d., for fuel, £2, 7s. od., for meal, milk, "loaf bread," eggs, butter, and so forth, £24, 12s. od., for "butcher meat," £2, 17s. od., and "servant's fee," £3, 10s. od. Books, binding, the printer, and the post took £7, 6s. od., but there was a *per contra* of £2, 14s. od. for books sold. The account closes with an over-plus of £1, 7s. 2d., and the head of the household thanks God for all His mercies, temporal and spiritual. A pretty stern reckoning on the material



side, yet the sons add their witness to the many testimonies Puritanism has from her children. Nothing oppressive, nothing sordid mingled with the life; it was strenuous but highly rational, filled with clear cheerfulness and the fine courage of the best Scottish exertion. The intelligence of the father kept it from being narrow; he was no bigot, either in thought or practice, and bare as the home was of modern comforts (at one time, no carpet on the parlour floor), it was rich in genial human sense and stimulus. George Gilfillan does not allow that even the Sabbaths were a weariness to the boy-nature. Like John Paton, he remembered them as days of high intellectual interest, of intimacy with kindling thoughts; the hills of Strathearn seemed to stand in a purer light, and vistas were opened beyond them, beyond mortal vision. The looms were all silent, the grey church set wide its door to the gathering population, the minister, with his sense of the prophet's mantle and the message to be delivered between morning and evening, became, for that day, a new and fascinating personage, minister of mysteries, awakener of glorious dreams. The evangelical preaching of those days had ever a diapason under-rolling its calmest exposition. When it spoke of doctrines, the national history was enfolded with the teaching for people whose immediate ancestors had spoken with those who knew "the killing time" and the terrible fervours of torture-chamber, dungeon, and scaffold. Nothing could have more effect upon a young and fiery mind. Heroism was not linked with vague names of Greek or Latin heroes—far-away glories!—but with those of people one knew. A few miles over a hill was a spot where plain men of one's own kin shed their

heart's blood for "Christ's Crown and Covenant," as they conceived it. One's own father had refused a good promise of preferment that he might be a minister of the poor Anti-burgher Church. All this, echoing through the Sabbath preachings, was no mean element of a boy's nurture. And to the last moment of his life the blood of the Scottish reformer was strong in George Gilfillan's veins. He parted with some of his ancestors' Calvinism, no doubt, but never with the Covenanter's and Seceder's faith. And the memory of his father as a preacher was always a cherished memory—a potent example.

The mother's share in the life of the Comrie manse must have been a strenuous one, but her cheerful dignity seems never to have failed. She was a woman comely to look upon, with the bright hair and open look that descended to George, and her temperament was of that prudent firm cordiality which ensures the warm esteem of others. She was strong, says their son, where her husband was weak. When he was excited she was calm. "He had much of the child, not a little of the poet. My mother, too, had a dash of the romantic in her composition; was an enthusiastic lover of nature; delighted in reading such poets as Milton, Thomson, and Cowper; and was, withal, of a quiet and composed character. I never saw her angry, I never saw her weep; she loved my father warmly, but shed no tears at his death; the grief was within. . . . A month afterwards her hair became grey, and she looked ten years older."

People who knew her, speak of the impression of mental strength that her look gave, and the hearty

pressure of her hand in meeting or parting, her cheery glance and word. In poverty and narrow circumstance she found, as other Puritan women have found, the strength of a great hope; in pain and labour she earned a woman's praise, trusting ever in her God and His providence. If it be true that the lives of the human race are sucked through the ages into one vast ocean from which the vapours of life rise again to water the earth with new pangs, new fears, new hopes, which yet are just the old ones re-dropped in evolutionary rain—then, indeed, are such women most miserable, for what have they of all their travail under the sun? Strangely indeed, if our neo-Pagans are right, have such as Rachel Barlas kept their faith and “looked for a city.”

“To a temperament, susceptible yet calm, a constitution, impressible yet strong, Calvinism came as an appropriate atmosphere,” says Gilfillan, writing of his mother. “That mixture of high severe principle and ardent devotion, the one acting and reacting on the other (the eternal decrees standing as snowy Alps above, and the streams from them refreshing and beautifying the warm valleys of practical Christianity below), the profound convictions implied in Calvinism became the very life of my mother's soul. Calvinism lifted her up and lowered her at the same time. . . . While still young and beautiful she used to retire to the churchyard of Comrie, and there in sight of one of the most lovely prospects in Scotland, spend many an hour in devout exercises. Afterward her religion assumed a quieter and deeper tone, and, after living a long, useful, and serene, though careful and anxious life, she fell asleep in Jesus, eighty-two years of age.”

After referring to the influence of the same creed on two characters so different as those of his parents, George Gilfillan adds that "both loved the Bible as they loved each other, with an affection lawful and unlimited, and both loved nature with a *tendresse* of which they felt perhaps a little ashamed." It may be added here that Gilfillan never printed one word, as to father or mother, wife or near friend, which might not have been read aloud in the streets of Comrie and Dundee.

George Gilfillan was the eleventh child of his parents, and "received the unalterable honours of birth" on the 30th of January—"a cold Saturday morning"—of the year 1813. The event took place in the old manse, now, with the church, tottering to decay in a back lane of Comrie. An attic of this house was provided with an opening into the end of the church, so that the mother detained at home with her babes could yet hear her husband preach. The dwelling was by no means one of the meanest, but it stands low upon the margin of the mingling Earn and Ruchil, and in George's childhood—when the modest income had grown a little—a move was made to the south-lying district called Dalginross, which is accounted the healthiest part of Comrie. It is this home, chiefly, that is associated with Gilfillan's earlier recollections. From it he had those walks with his father to church, or to the old garden beside the preaching green where the present manse was built. In an upper room of this Dalginross home his father died.

The youngest living child of the family, George was left, by three deaths, in the position practically of an only son. The other brothers were out of the



nest before he came to it, James to be a minister, William to the cotton trade in Glasgow, a third to a ramble which led him as far as Australia. One sister married early, another somewhat later, three remained with the mother, and beyond them, separated in various ways, stood this eager-eyed boy, his father's own son, and, for a few happy years his father's favoured companion. "It was inevitable," he says, "that I should be left a good deal alone in the house, and should resort much to my father's company, who was besides very partial to me. Never shall I forget that sweetest intercourse! . . . Between the garden and house was his favourite walk; and, as I accompanied him, I derived more pleasure, and more information too, in an hour or two than from days of my ordinary teachers. Now he asked questions; now he encouraged me to ask questions of him; now he stooped over a flower and told me something of its construction, or repeated the famous story of Beattie and the cresses. Now his eye caught a cloud, and straightway his fine simple fancy—a fancy resembling in some points that of Addison—was stirred, and his soaring was as beautiful as it was brief. Now he expatiated on some author of genius, Milton, Johnson, or Cowper; and his criticisms, if not subtle and refined, were glowing and generous; and now he told me anecdotes of his early struggles and college career, of which I remember little but a general impression of their interest, and the genial humour in which some of them were enshrined. Besides being often with him in his walks, I was a good deal with him in his study. The window of that room looked out upon the fields and woods, 'having a look southward and being open to the whole noon of nature,'

and near that window my father's desk was sure to be placed. His books were collected in a recess, and there I was often found, seated on a stool, and poring over a book to the tune of my father's pen racing over a page, and sometimes of his voice directing me to consult a volume or supply a date."

Further on he tells how, when he had secured, by stealth, a copy of "Rob Roy," and was found reading it, his father took the book and put it away in his own desk; but was himself caught, a day or two later, his desk half open and his grey head bent to the spell that had entangled the boy: whereupon, like a sensible man and a lover of genius, he smiled and gave back the tale. No doubt he finished it himself afterwards. The mother held somewhat stricter views, but the little story is enough to show what is implied in all Gilfillan's notes of his father, that between these two there was a very good understanding. The nature of each was touched with the same prickly heat; and, if the parent had lived to an advanced age he would have seen the eager intelligence of his own life bearing a fruit of rougher rind and stronger flavour. He fulfilled himself, one may say, to the limit of time-powers; his son was, to the end, after a striking and influential career, to some extent an unfulfilled prophecy. Did the difference lie in circumstance or in the blood, or in that war between the two which accounts for so much in our human story? It is certain that the boy had powers, early asserting themselves, which required, and would have answered to, a strong discipline; and this was wanting to him, both in childhood and youth. With his father's library, and his father's talk, with the Highland voices breathing continually about him, with

self-chosen exercises that will be referred to presently, and the occasional flash of some great book, like a November meteor, across his sky, the lad found much stimulus, but too little direction; the mind awakened fast, but lacked steady guidance on the mental side.

At the same time, what is loss, what gain, in the development of a spirit—and a spirit so original, so “forgitive” as that of George Gilfillan? The only thing irreparable in any life is to let go one’s great intuitions. For the rest, it is as Carlyle said:—“The expressly appointed schoolmasters and schoolings we get are as nothing compared with the unappointed, incidental, and continual ones, whose school-hours are all the days and nights of our existence, and whose lessons, noticed or unnoticed, stream in upon us with every breath we draw.”

Three influences chiefly swayed the life of Gilfillan from his early days. They were—Literary heroes Highland scenery, and his father’s free church ministry. The first two of these have to be traced in some detail, for they were extraordinarily operative; the third interwove itself with all, but as a memory, for in the autumn of 1826 the father was suddenly taken away. Once and again the story is told by his younger son, and each piece has its own bits of detail plucked alive from a memory that forgot nothing which had ever been of interest to it, least of all a matter of such intense pain and pity as this death.

“It had been a splendid season; and, although not very robust, my father had enjoyed himself exceedingly. . . . I see him yet, sitting under a tree, when the sun was westering in the afternoon, or when a dim haze was covering the sky, telling us that this

was the kind of weather common in Peru. He was preaching with even more than his usual power and vivacity, and as autumn arrived seemed to enter on an Indian summer. I shall never forget seeing him, with my mother, setting out on his last excursion. I had gone over to the village library for a volume of Plutarch, which I was holding as a prize, and occasionally stopping to read. Returning, I met my parents setting out on the last walk they were ever to have in this world. My father asked me, 'What book is that?' I told him, and he darted at me a look of eager complacency which has since often been a key to unlock the fountain of my tearful memories, and sometimes a 'perge' to cheer me on my way. It seemed to say, 'Be, if you can, a hero like those whose lives you are about to read.' He and my mother were going to visit a family in the country. They returned at night (Wednesday, 11th October), and were scarcely home till my good, kind father was seized with his last illness."

One who has reared a deathless trophy says of her beloved in brief, keen words: "Never in all her life had she lingered over any task that lay before her, and she did not linger now. She sank rapidly. She made haste to leave us." So might it have been said of Samuel Gilfillan. The strong man wrestled with the stronger than he, who had overtaken him, then gave the victor his spoils and ended the struggle. Two days he fought. The Saturday was an interlude, "a quiet, grey day," and the disease seemed quelled. The following morning a boy awoke in the grey dawn to an experience he never forgot, the voice of a father's anguish, renewed and renewed, till at last the strength was exhausted, and silent spent farewells



succeeded to broken message and entreaty. His eye lingered to the last upon her, who, the heavier labours over, had looked for a gentle evening of life with him and now stood "in calm, speechless sorrow, like one seeing from the shore a friend rushing down a remorseless rapid." Ere evening the rapids were passed, "the presence of death was authentically proclaimed ; we turned from the bed, and looked with a sick and strange emotion to the golden autumn day, the stubble fields, the lonely hills, the solemn silence of the Sabbath, which seemed to lie in sympathy without."

"I was a child no more. I had lost in one day my father and my childhood."

## CHAPTER II.

### RELIGION AND NATURE.

THE influences that shaped Gilfillan's mind and gave to his inner life its direction and colour were more various than his early situation might have seemed to promise. Comrie was an outlying village, communicating with the outer world by means of a weekly carrier, and though the atmosphere was far from stupid, as we have seen, it cannot be thought of as rich in material for an eager mind. Nevertheless, in one way or another, the Gilfillans, father and sons, obtained books and learned what was going on in the world. Great names were borne on the breezes and occasionally flittered through the conversation of visitors. The local influences were those of nature and religion ; the former felt chiefly by a few, the latter sufficing nobly in many cases. For the special case, however, the religious element in Comrie might not suffice. One who refused definite fashioning and could not endure restraint might fly altogether into a land of his own choosing. Hazlitt, son of a dissenting minister down in Shropshire, repudiates his early associations so decidedly that he once confesses to Leigh Hunt, "no thoughts on religion at all ;" that greatest region of man's psychical and moral effort a mere void to him. Gilfillan never went out into this

desert. His was a religious soul. He loved imagination not wisely, but too well in some respects ; the beautiful was always to him, wherever he found it, the Divine. Yet nothing could be beautiful for him which did not contain or suggest a thought of God. He was not repelled by the Puritanism of Comrie ; neither was he straitly fashioned ; and his originality is seen in this, that for himself, by a native instinct, he seized on the ideas essential to religion and those essential to literature, and was the first to present, in popular and taking form, a criticism of life that was true, equally to each realm, in all necessary matters. To many religious persons of his time he represented the inrush of the secular spirit, heresy, and lawlessness ; for others, his desire to reach a new construction in faith was simply ruin to his character as critic and literary man. There are many who set him on one side as a man spoiled by theology. His effort, they will say, was an impossible one. But the religious world ought, at last, thoroughly to recognise his genius and his achievement.

The Puritan home of childhood planted deep in him its sense of moral order, and the conviction, or, at least, the hope of certain great ideas, "poem-mysteries" of faith. Whereunto he did not attain in this he cast ever a look of ardent regard and sympathy. No one can read his writings in the most casual way, and not feel the heart-throbs of a man to whom the word Christ is the name above every name, the centre of the vast processions of time, and the thought of the Eternal Father the one oracle by which the soul makes its way over the sands of destiny. Gilfillan, like many another, found a riddle in Nature which he could never read.

The perpetual question was his question, but, happily, the hope too :—

“ What of the heart of hate,  
That beats in thy breast, O time ?  
Red strife from the furthest prime,  
And anguish of fierce debate ;  
War that shatters her slain,  
And peace that grinds them as grain,  
And eyes fixed ever in vain,  
On the pitiless eyes of Fate.  
Still we say as we go,  
‘ Strange to think by the way,  
Whatever there is to know,  
That shall we know some day.’ ”

The greatest genius rises above that, above the zone of storm ; but Gilfillan was always on the shoulders of his own Ben Voirlich, where winds blow and mists sweep, and the glorious panorama around is caught in dazzling moments. His religious life knew some great hours, little calm weather. If there came to him such a time as came to Chalmers and Duncan, it could not so thoroughly sweep his energy before it. Haunted as he was, from the cradle to the grave, by that double voice in the breast which men call “ the temperament of genius,” it was impossible for him to rise from a sick-bed and go forth, like Chalmers, in the robust simplicity of a realised mission, or, like Rabbi Duncan, to accept repose and hope as the satisfaction of the reason. Gilfillan wanted the interpretation of the intellectual-religious life ; and he never found it. He was one of those who have to say at the end, “ The chase takes our life—that is all ! ” To the majority of religious people it seems too much. For them it is parting with the benefit of Christ’s sacrifice ; the believer



should find the dual voices hushed within him, and the antinomy of nature overcome by the message of Calvary.

They are right—if they can attain to it. They are right if their hearts do not condemn them. But the simple faith that has left the name of Chalmers clear on one page of Scottish history, and that of John Cairns luminous on another, was not possible to Gilfillan. If Cairns was haunted, he bore the sense of it as a private weakness. To him the riddle lay in the broken stream of Christianity, tortured among old-time rocks and wasted in pools. Let men seek, as they might, a clear course for the waters to sweep through the lands. No private need could overbear the need for that. At the very opposite of John Cairns stood George Gilfillan, full of the personal question, turning now upon the church, now upon the sceptic outside the church, upholding with fervour the institutions of Puritanism, and then shocking the Puritan by an *éloge* of Shelley or Byron, a satire upon well-known ecclesiastics. All this was harder to understand fifty years ago than it is now. Gilfillan was one of those who have made it possible for two men different as himself and John Cairns to be ministers of the same church, the one seeing Limitation as the law of Power, the other feeling passionately the demand that power, in the individual, ever raises for freedom.

The startling departure from himself which Gilfillan seemed to make in "Christianity and our Era" is a testimony to the strength of his religious feelings, and the hold upon him of the Church and the Church's pre-suppositions. He was never one to fight and feel no wound; he loved to

have the air warm around him ; above all, he clung more and more to the great Figure on the Rock of Calvary ; and while some inferior motives might mix themselves, these great impulsions were no doubt the cause of the new tone he seemed to adopt about the year 1856. If inconsistency there were—and that is not proven to those who really know the man—it may well be forgiven by any who are concerned to find him as earnest for faith as for liberty, as much the Christian as the man of intellect.

And that he was, though he had to swim for the life of his soul in a perilous sea. “The longer I live,” he once wrote to his friend Aird, “I am the more firmly persuaded of the truth of our blessed faith, and more anxious to do some little thing in its defence. Oh, that I had as much of the spirit and grace of Christianity as I have firmness of conviction in its truth !” Indeed, no one who knew him could doubt that Gilfillan lived out his storm and stress in the hope of the Gospel, a hope that never died away though the soil of creed out of which it sprang was loosened in frost and rain.

His friend, Thomas Aird, was fond of repeating, “The great heart of the world is just,” and the heart of the Scots world has responded wonderfully to George Gilfillan’s. It has understood that he never left behind him the great traditions of the fathers, and that when he failed, even, he failed as one whose passion was for highest truth and fairest beauty, for Christian truth and Christian life.

How could it be otherwise? He was extremely sensitive to all large and kindling ideas, and as a mere culture there is no rival to Christianity in the field of human research or speculation. Take the form of it

called Calvinism. Be its sins what they may, it is a tremendous mental discipline, and has proved itself, the world over, a unique instrument of mental no less than moral development. The world is beginning to see this, and there is no need to enlarge upon the fact. Calvinism has entered into the life of the race with strong affirmations and infinite possibilities. It is a logic suffused with imagination—both stern, both majestic, coming with power to men who know the struggle of time and desire the judgment of eternity. The seceders of Scotland were such men, and there were amongst them, from the first, many souls of singular force and subtlety, many in whom was seen a fine “other-worldliness”—a strange and simple charm. Among the ministers of Gilfillan’s youth scattered about the towns and villages of Scotland were such men as Dr. Heugh, Dr. Young of Perth, Dr. Jamieson of the Scottish Dictionary, and not a few others who, in more public situations, related visibly to affairs and persons called “important,” would have been known to general history by this time as a very striking group of human personalities.

“About 1820,” says Gilfillan, “genius was mainly on the side of Christianity;” and with Hall and Chalmers, Irving and the Parthian Foster, he names his father’s friend John Jameson, minister of Methven, near Perth. Dr. Cairns, in his life of Dr. John Brown, endorses the estimate of Jameson as a man in whom a certain unquestionable originality was lodged, and Gilfillan’s picture of him is confirmed by the portrait in the memoir. There we see the face of a “wise-like” boy, touched with a sorrowful experience that feels strange to the guileless soul, and with a quaint wistfulness of outlook, as of one who has heard angels

speaking to him by the way, and would fain see them. In the eyes a bright simplicity, on the shy lips a tremulous patience; the grey hair, falling back from a high brow, is inappropriate to the rest.

As a very close friend of the family, Mr. Jameson gave Samuel Gilfillan's funeral sermon; and he admitted George to the fellowship of the church, at a Crieff communion, probably in the following year. His preaching was full of charm for the lad, unequal, and sometimes strangely wandering as it was. "His face," says Gilfillan, "was long, thin, colourless, with a rapt yet mild expression lying on it, like a sleepy sunshine; his manner was now slow and drawling, now fierce and violent. . . . It was at Stirling, I think, that my first impression of his peculiar genius was received. I well remember, on an autumnal Saturday evening, about the year 1825, being sent with a candle into the room where he was alone, preparing for the labours of the morrow,—no notes or books beside him, but on his face a look of rapt contemplation I shall never forget." He goes on to recall the oddity of Jameson's manner in the pulpit, the lingering suggestiveness of some phrases, the *canty* pathos of others, the weird rush with which he launched into space when seized by a thought or a dream. It was old-world preaching as to style, but infused with the charm of a meek yet discerning personality. "There was a generous incredulity in his heart, and about his mind a fine floating atmosphere of enthusiasm. Nature he loved to a passion. Literature was very dear to him. His blood rose when he talked of Campbell's poetry or Scott's novels; and his cheek flushed a deep red, I remember, when I repeated to him Blake's lines on the tiger, which till then he had



not known." Gilfillan adds that in untaught gentlemanhood his old friend brought to mind the beloved disciple. "You wondered that he was not translated."

But indeed he was. His father—Anti-Burgher minister in Kilwinning—died kneeling at his chair while the son conducted family prayer; and the son was writing a letter in his Methven study one day on behalf of a parishioner, when a touch arrested his hand: he lay down upon the hearth, and there a daughter discovered him not long afterwards "with *the* smile shining all radiant upon his face." They say it was to be seen at the closing of the coffin.

This minister of Methven, who found in the evangelicalism of our early century "a shelter and an inspiration," did as much as any one to make George Gilfillan draw towards it in the same way. Jameson appears under the name Elphinstone in "The History," but a paper in *Hogg's Instructor*, 1851, gives a fuller portrait and more indication of Gilfillan's debt to him. In this friend, as in his own father, he saw warm and tender piety associated with the keenest appetite for literature, art, nature, with the love of song and rippling humour. The intellectual life was honoured, practical duty no less, man's existence not on any side ignored or practically misunderstood.

Among the influences of youth Gilfillan himself names the "tent preachings,"—those periodical assemblies which seemed to combine all that was best with some of what was worst in the Scottish character, its passion for great ideas and for the intimacies of nature, its rude freedom and noisy force. The tent preachings have been often described, often, perhaps, misconceived. In Gilfillan's youth they were drawing

to their close. Dr. Paton Gloag says they ended shortly before his own time in lowland parishes, but Comrie was half Highland, and he frequently assisted there, during the ministry of Dr. Macdonald, in communion services of a transition kind. Among the Secession churches the custom seems to have lingered, yet the great gathering at Comrie, in the beautiful July of 1834, was probably among the last at which Gilfillan was present. And in his description all is favourable—superb weather, impassioned utterance, Mitchell preaching, Jameson in one of his finest moods, the amphitheatre of dark hills rising against the sky, and the muffled voice of the torrent stealing out of a secret gorge. Religion and nature came together here, the improvisator for God lifted his voice over wood and stream, the crowds wavered between high-strung feeling and secular recoil, the whole event was full of drama and excitement, and in all the assembly no one so quick to share these, or so apt to retain a wild keen glow as Gilfillan, who, in seeming carelessness, looked now to the mountains, now to the bridge where Earn and Ruchil mingled their waters, now glared at the audience and now at the preacher. The story goes that when he was a boy the circle of devout, scandalised by his manner, would “quarrel” him afterwards for his airs, but always found that he could repeat more of the discourses than they could. His interest in preaching as a fine art was ever of the keenest, and the scene which, as he says, “stirred even dull men, and electrified men of genius,” thrilled himself with the charm of two worlds. A large assembly never failed to have the effect upon him of potent wine, running through his veins, exciting every cell of the brain. And these

gatherings were in the open, under a glorious summer sky, fenced with blue hill and plummy wood! The mysteries of faith blent with those of earth; the insignificance of man as the last term of a mortal series gave place to his power of insight and prediction, the spell he drew from the clouds and cast over his fellow-men.

Tent preachings are gone, with a departed age, its vices and virtues, but in their passing they helped to form the strength and the weakness of George Gilfillan.

The influence of Highland scenery must not be passed over, in estimating Gilfillan. Perhaps it is unwise to say of any genius that he was too much alone in the natural habitat, that they had too much to say to each other. Is it not this intimacy that makes the genius? And yet, if any one asks why this man never came to his full heritage, the answer is easily given; he was too rich in youth, and rejoiced too soon in his strength. In a sense he was an intellectual libertine; his boyhood in the Earn valley gave him such a sense of the glory of tumultuous life and abounding force. Those who were unaware of his early circumstances may well have marvelled how the literary instinct that was so strong in Gilfillan did not compel him to chasten the excursions of his pen, and how the penetrating judgment that made him a singularly acute and stimulating critic did not apply itself to his own aims and results. How could he be satisfied with his style? Could he fail to know that he not infrequently drove upon the perilous edge, and came home with the clay of mere bombast soiling the wheels of his equipage? He did know it, but he reproached himself too late. After forty it is as hard to acquire a style as to shed a habit, and George Gilfillan,

if a son of Christopher North, was no less the child of nature. His style was a Highland water, tearing a glen for itself through the hills. Wander up the Lednock valley after a week of storm, and you will come at the secret of him in this point. Here a spell was cast upon him that lasted his life.

The Lednock is a reserved and gloomy torrent, keeping its passion more to itself than some others do, and sliding swiftly from an open pastoral glen to a dark rift of tree and rock from which it does not emerge until its fury is spent, its dolour over, and it becomes the babbling tributary of the Earn. You stand on the brink of the gorge and listen to the hidden thunder of the cataract above; you descend to the ledges beside the falls and watch the white fury of the water-fiend as it flies from one black wall of rock to be flung back from another, and hurl itself out of your sight through the quick descending ravine and the covering wood. That living torment of insatiable desire, that keen fling of power against power, that roar and hiss of a spirit leaping from one grave to another—conceive the effect upon an imaginative, lonely boy, of pure Highland type, in mind and body, who made his home as it were in this rift in the hills, and came to know every note in the mingled shriek and diapason of the water-spirit. Comrie has other charms—the brown babble of the Ruchil as it breaks out of Glen Artney, the silent flow of the Earn, the variety of line and richness of effect in the sweep of the heights from pass to pass. But the weird trouble of the Lednock had the most attraction for Samuel Gilfillan's youngest son. We may think of him hanging over the Deil's Cauldron, and vainly trying to find words to express *that*! No words can express it;



the thing is elemental and defies the symbol ; and in George Gilfillan, too, there was a something elemental, demanding, yet for ever unsatisfied with the most vehement forms of human speech. Ossian, Byron, Shelley, Wilson, Foster, Burke, Burns—Foster, who might have been a hermit of that Lednock chasm—all continued the craving aroused by the natural force. The human spirit in its panting after the sublime, the free, the strong, was it not a great Lednock, hurling itself out of the earth against the iron walls that confine thought and desire? The youth felt in himself a throb at least of that which burned in poets and patriots of his land, the poignant strife of the soul with convention, with circumstance, with high and deep necessity. How could the spirit deliver itself in words written or spoken? Life is more than any symbol.

True very strikingly of Carlyle, our greatest ; this is true also of Gilfillan, and in his case the cosmic influences—"natural scenery" as we say—were far more intimately felt than by Carlyle. They were felt as part of religion. That, too, was more than any symbol.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE STUDENT, 1825-1835.

WITH the flash and gloom of the mountain torrent in his soul, a country boy, but already an observer of the larger world, George Gilfillan joined in November, 1825, the first Latin class at Glasgow University. Not yet thirteen years of age, he went from Mr. Drummond's school, over against the church of Comrie, within easy reach of crag, and wood, and brawling stream, where lessons were an interlude in the teaching of nature rather than the business of life, to the crowded class-room in which keen city youth met country novice, not without urbane scorn, and distinction had to be won on harder terms. Gilfillan seems to have felt the contrast, for his first session has no notice in his recollections.

In the "History of a Man" he speaks of the following winter as that in which he plunged into the new life. The session began within a few weeks of his father's death; and as he took the southward road on a quiet bright day of November, 1826, the landscape appeared to be "suffused with a tenderer sadness." "I had much in the past, and in the future," he says, "which might well have made me melancholy; but what can depress the bubbling blood of fourteen?"

It was unfortunate that firmer government at home

and at school had not prepared him better for the University. But every Scottish boy was expected to bend himself to hard study by a sort of natural predisposition ; and, although George had been wayward and dreamy hitherto, would he not, like others, give his whole mind now to the regulation tasks ? College life, however, did not awaken the instinct. Books were his enthusiasm, and those that attracted him were devoured in haste. On the other hand, he disliked the steady grind necessary to scholarship. His earliest joy in Glasgow was not to find himself a red-gowned student with the hope of academical distinction, but to discover in the house of the relation with whom he lived a complete copy of "Shakespeare," the first he had ever seen. "On Saturday mornings," says the "History," "the only mornings the students were not compelled to rise at seven and repair to their classes, I was wont, awakening at the usual hour, to dart out of a sofa-bed where I lay, and, seizing on Shakespeare, keep it pressed to my bosom till the first peep of day, when I lay on in luxurious enjoyment, nestling among the warm blankets and reading the immortal page."

The classes he attended in 1826-27 were Latin and Greek, the Latin taught by Josiah Walker, the Greek by Daniel Keyte Sandford. With a vein of social or oratorical ambition, which led him afterwards to become a candidate for Parliament, Sandford was a strict disciplinarian, a patient teacher, an enthusiast in his subject. "He showed," says Gilfillan, "a genuine love of learning. Greek, we saw, was his universe." The writing of Greek verse he greatly insisted on ; but to this literary "divertisement" George never took kindly. "While my fellow-students were making

their hexameters and iambics, as they often did extempore in the class, I had a volume of *Old Mortality* or of *Tom Jones* with me, and forgot what I then deemed the pedantic hubbub around while thrilling beside Burley in the cave, or accompanying Jones and Partridge in their memorable night journey."

This session was distinguished by an event which thoroughly aroused young Gilfillan's literary enthusiasm—the election of Thomas Campbell, the poet, to the office of Lord Rector. He had always a keen and proud remembrance of that high day in the College when Campbell came to be installed and to deliver his inaugural address. "I saw the pale, thin, sensitive-faced poet, with those black, beaming eyes, rising up to bespeak the breathless assembly. I noticed that tremble in his voice and manner of which his biographer speaks in describing the scene, which left him, however, as he proceeded. I remember the effect produced by some of his better passages. When he said, for instance, that he was 'far from wishing to damp the spirit of any boy-poet,' a hundred young, ingenuous faces instantaneously sparkled up as in a gleam of sudden sunshine." Campbell seems to have electrified his young constituents. "When we saw the active little man, with his frank, easy manner and his universal fame, walking daily in the midst of us, it was as if 'the gods had come down to us in the likeness of men.'"

The summer of 1827 was spent at Comrie. The cottage to which his mother and sisters soon afterwards removed stands by the road to Strowan, on the verge of a plantation which became to George a mystical retreat. His studies were not neglected.



To read the Iliad and Lucian he rose at six in the morning for a while. But his great discovery was Chalmers' "Astronomical Discourses," which happily gave his thought that spiritual direction it was in danger of losing. Smollett, Fielding, and Scott were beckoning him to humour, freedom, and romance. Till he found Chalmers it might have appeared that striking genius and power lay chiefly on the secular side, and following Byron and the older novelists he might have come to think of religion as too limiting for a fiery spirit. Now he saw that one might have literary power, might be eloquent and command the ear of the age, might even be scientific, and none the less Christian. It was romance turned to the highest use, striking the bold and glowing notes of an eternal lyre. He had been prepared by the influence of his father and Mr. Jameson to find that religion could expand by its own force into the widest region of thought, and ally itself divinely with intellectual art. Now he learned how the miracle was wrought; and Chalmers became a spiritual father. In one of his first articles of any note, contributed in 1839 to the *Edinburgh University Magazine*, he has the following passage: "Hazlitt has recorded with much gusto his first perusal of this volume (the 'Astronomical Discourses'), under an apple-tree in the garden at Boxhill. I shall not soon forget the time and circumstances in which I first read it—in the solitude of a mountainous country, and at the age of fifteen. Fontenelle had previously taught me the doctrine of a plurality of worlds; but Chalmers drew first fully the curtain from the glories of the universe, and showed my young soul some of the secrets of that abyss which is foaming with worlds. I felt lifted up,

upon his style as upon wings, into those regions 'calm, of mild and serene air,' where burn the innumerable and eternal stars. I learned, speaking it reverently, to take up the earth and all its isles as a very little thing. . . . It is a proud and lofty moment when the imagination first launches away into that great ocean, every wave of which is a world. And I shall cherish its memory for ever."

Eager to sail forth on the *mare magnum* of English composition, Gilfillan joined the logic class of 1827-28. Of Buchanan the professor he says that "his sympathies, on the whole, were with the artificial and conventional." Yet he acknowledges the high accomplishment, varied knowledge, and strong good sense of the teacher. Three essays a-week were required for the first part of the session, and towards the close the writing of five large themes, a logic essay, the analysis of part of a classical poem, an exegesis, an oration, and a descriptive essay, in prose or verse at the writer's pleasure. A fellow-student, James Howie, M.D., author of "Sketches of Britain," &c., dating in 1878 from Cuba, Mo., U.S.A., says: "We were in the logic class together, and somewhat early in the session of 1827-28 I well remember the young, tall lad, dressed neatly, but in apparently homespun garb, being called upon to read an essay on the association of ideas, the subject for the class given out two days before. The first words of Professor Buchanan's criticism were, 'We have got a young Chalmers among us;' and instantly we made the floor and benches sound loud with our feet, the Professor trying to modify his praise by saying that he did not mean that logic students were to follow the style of Dr. Chalmers. But the explanation only

increased the noise ; and it being near the end of the hour, no doubt to the relief of the Professor, we were dismissed in great glee."

"How vividly," says Gilfillan, "I remember that happiest of all my college sessions—the bench (it was number five) where I sat in the class—the figures of the students who were nearest me, as well as those of the more distinguished scattered throughout the hall." Among others, he mentions Robert Cotton Mather, William Hanna, John Eadie, and John Croumbie Brown. Two sessions later, Archibald Swinton, Tait (afterwards Archbishop), and Morell Mackenzie, of whom "*Remoter Stars*" contains a sketch, were the triumvirate of the year.

Closing the session with distinction, the lad returned to Comrie in the highest spirits. Writing was now his luxury, and when that could not be afforded, for paper was often beyond his means, he practised a method of what he calls "*internal composition*" by the river or among the woods. An essay on the Scottish Covenanters, written partly this summer and partly in 1829, long lost and almost forgotten, was found in 1863 by his brother and put into his hands. "It seemed," he says, "a buried bone of my body revived. Ere I read it again it acted like a shock of electricity, bringing back not the mere facts of my fifteenth year, for these are all daguerrotyped on my memory, but all the freshness of the feeling I then possessed. It restored me the sight of the old east room in my mother's dwelling, with the little low window looking out toward the woods of Lawers and the banks of the Earn, where I began to read the Hebrew Bible, wrote my first sermon (on the text, '*God is a Spirit*'), and hammered out with consider-

able labour several essays besides that on the Covenanters; and of the old green-covered desk of my father's, on which I was wont to write. . . . I have decided to print the dear old essay as an appendix to the new edition of the 'Covenanters.\*' That summer I read Kenilworth for the first time with vast relish, part of it while sitting in a tree on the east side of my mother's house. How delightful, after reading or composing, it was to plunge into the wood beside and wander there for hours in ecstasy. God bless that wood and all its pure and pleasing memories!"

The intense activity of the lad's mind is illustrated by an incident of this period which he narrates in detail. On his way to college he stayed for a few days at a friend's, probably his brother's, in Stirling, and there procured some old volumes of Blackwood containing Wilson's papers on "Streams," "Cottages," "A Glance at Selby's Ornithology," and the best of the "Noctes." "The impression produced on my mind was exciting, electrifying, intoxicating. I remember that one night, after reading, I think, 'Cottages,' and 'Selby,' I could not sleep, but lay awake till long past midnight in a rapt reverie composing a description of my native place in my own style, but coloured a little by the papers I had been reading, or, to speak more correctly, all the scenery of Strathearn came rushing in words upon my view. It was the most glorious night I ever spent, and when morning arrived I renewed my reading of the inspiring page. . . . I had met no writing which in its wild freedom, its incontrollable power, its mag-

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\* Published by Gall & Inglis, 1863.



nificent divergencies and errors pleased me so much."

While he read there was in his mind the recollection of former delight in Wilson's work and of one glimpse of the yellow haired demigod driving through the street of Comrie. The glamour of Christopher North fell upon the young student and was certainly one of the less happy influences of his life. He lamented that his way had not led him to Edinburgh for the session of 1828-29, where he would have enjoyed the splendid excitement of the Moral Philosophy class-room; and there were reasons for this regret, if it be true, as he alleges, that Professor Milne "set himself in a quiet but effectual way to shake the belief of his students," and that he "sneered at some of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity." Wilson made no such attempt to pervert faith. But the "Walpurgis Nights" of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* were not for a lad keenly susceptible alike on the sensuous and the intellectual side, with little skill to discern between the good and evil in literature. From the hour of his first introduction to Wilson's writings, Gilfillan was caught in their splendid snare. The boldness of Wilson was of just that kind Gilfillan did not need to aim at. In his second sketch of Christopher North, he says, "His criticisms are sometimes rambling, sometimes rhapsodical, sometimes overdone in praise or in blame; often you are compelled to differ from his opinions and sometimes to doubt if they are fully formed in his own mind; and in polish, precision, and depth, they are inferior to a few others; but in heartiness, eloquence, variety, consummate ease of motion, native insight and sincerity they stand alone." What he here praises as Wilson's virtues, he

made his own, and not without yielding to the attendant errors.

During the sessions 1828-29 and 1829-30 Gilfillan's chief companion was George Beveridge, a native of Ayrshire, of whom he says: "I learned more facts and more about philosophic theories from this poor, pale, ill-dressed lad than from any source which ever opened on me. He taught me to relish Godwin and Shelley against whom I had strong prejudices. It was at his lodging that I first saw Wilson's review in *Blackwood* of the Revolt of Islam, the extracts from which struck me so forcibly that I made Beveridge procure me the poem from the college library; and I read it with rapture. . . . Day after day we paced up those College-Green walks Scott has described in 'Rob Roy,' walks shaded with trees and passing amidst extensive fields through which a dull stream called the Molendinar wound its Lethean current. It was winter; and the scene, although diversified by merry groups of red-gowned students, with occasional ladies, the wives or daughters of the professors, was sufficiently dreary. Yet there are few scenes I have ever visited, after long absence, with more pleasure, more of the joy of grief, than those old walks where George Beveridge and I talked down hours to moments in such themes as the Infinite Evil of Sin. It was pure intellectual gladiatorship, familiar to him by habit, but on which I entered with all the delight of one who finds himself in a new element, and finds that element more congenial to him than he supposed." Further interesting recollections of Beveridge are preserved in the Journal under 13th January, 1863. He died in 1835.

Between his fourth and fifth college sessions

Gilfillan would, in the ordinary course, have proceeded to the "Divinity Hall" of the United Secession Church to begin his five years of theological study. The purpose of entering the ministry, however, which had so far been part of his life, was for a time in abeyance, and the reason is indicated in the "History of a Man." A mind like his could not escape the fire-trial of doubt. Now the questionings of the boy became more serious inquiries that led into the depths. He affirms that even before he joined the Logic class he began to be haunted with the question, Is Christianity, after all, true? "Sometimes I fancied I perceived discrepancies in the Scriptural narratives; sometimes I doubted of the divinity of Christ, or of eternal torments, or of the doctrine of the Trinity. . . . I felt that I could not reconcile Christianity to nature, to man, to philosophy and science, to literature and poetry." Allowance made for the precocity of his intellect, and also for the salutary occupation of his mind with study and books, it may be assumed that these were mere superficial drifts of thought. But a year or two afterwards he says: "I saw, along with Beveridge, that the external evidences were not demonstrative, and I had not then learned to feel the force of the internal. I almost entirely lost my piety. I lost all delight in prayer, although I still practised it as a form. I became a listless hearer of sermons, and felt little else than contempt for the preachers I did hear, contrasting their platitudes with the burning glories of the style of Shelley, Godwin, and my other literary idols. I began, along with my friend, to doubt the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, and to do away with the main pillar of its support, the infinite evil of sin. This I saw to be a logical fallacy,

but did not see to be at the same time a melancholy fact. . . . My conscience at this time was asleep, and was confirmed in its slumbers by the fact that my life was blameless. I found even a delight and luxury in doubt, and read no books with such relish as those mentioned above and the works of Brockden Brown ; all of which are shadowed by a sublime scepticism, amidst which I loved to walk as if in the cool, genial glooms of a primeval forest. I felt, too, a species of distinction in my sceptical notions, which, although I dared not avow them, yet gave me a sweet sense of superiority to others with whom I mingled. With such ideas I felt excessively reluctant to enter on the study of Divinity, to which my friends had destined me, and contrived to put off beginning the course for a year."

With great candour and even *naïveté* he thus states his position ; and when he goes on to tell how his way was opened, or rather how he came to feel himself shut up to the ministry as a profession, he is equally frank. There is no attempt to hide the fact that his ambitions and likings would have made him choose a literary life. " But I was miserably poor. I was, in all matters of business, a blind blunderer. I had heard, too, a great deal of the precariousness of the literary man's life ; and I felt, therefore, that I must become either a wreck or a minister." At Comrie, during the summer, the society of his mother and other friends, much solitary communion with the great surrounding forms of nature, and, above all, the study of the Scriptures in the original (he read the Greek Testament through several times, and about one-half of the Hebrew Bible), united to renew his religious impressions. Church history also engaged



his attention, and he describes himself as especially interested in the heresies of the early centuries. But there can be no doubt the turning point was reached, and his resolution to undertake the ministry of the gospel saved from becoming a mere make-shift by the fascinating hope of a millennium which now broke upon his mind. He speaks of this prospect as coming to him, not in the form in which he afterwards believed it, that is to say, as connected with the personal pre-millennial advent, but in the form in which it is held by the majority of Christians. By the glowing picture it opened before him of a time of universal peace and blessedness, by presenting Christ and the gospel as the only means by which this world may become a paradise, Christianity asserted its power and seized his mind. His poetical, sympathetic imagination responded to a great hope. "I loved the thought for its consoling character, for its sublimity and its poetry." The following summer was one of renewed rapture in declamations or soliloquies like those of his boyhood, the difference being that sacred subjects now chiefly engaged him.

The first session of his theological course was spent at Glasgow in the autumn of 1830. His work here began under Dr. John Mitchell, professor of Biblical Literature, a man of "rare simplicity, goodness, and amiability," who, "though he had a quick and keen eye for the peculiarities of human character and life in all the grades and circles of society, never became satirical, far less stoical."\* "A better man," says Gilfillan, "a gentler, or one who displayed on occasion a finer Christian unction in his prelections, preachings,

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\* "The United Presbyterian Hall," by the Rev. P. Landreth.

and prayers never lived. . . . I learned nothing from him except a tolerable share of the little Hebrew which was to be got in his class, which I have since managed almost entirely to forget, and, I may add, a profound appreciation of his own character as a pattern of those pastoral virtues which he so affectionately inculcated on his students.\* Dr. Mitchell taught both the first and second classes, so that in 1831 as well as 1830 Gilfillan was under him. In 1832 the professor was Dr. Dick, a man of colder wisdom, though full of interest in his class, whose lectures in their published form were used as the Theological Text-book long after he was gone. This class met also in Glasgow, but the death of Dr. Dick in January, 1833, and the appointment of Dr. Duncan, minister in Mid-Calder, shifted the scene of Gilfillan's fourth session to that pleasant little Mid-Lothian town of which he says:—"Hours of richer, purer, and more varied enjoyment, I and my companions never passed on earth than in the mellow afternoons which bathed thy scenery, or when at night the moon-beams poured their 'holier day' upon thy glimmering stubble fields! The world was then all before us; life was new, and its enchanted cup was sparkling at the brim. Never do any of us meet who studied together there, but the mention of the name Mid-Calder abolishes the existence of twenty years, and makes our eyes sparkle and our hearts heave as we remember our walks, our talks, our little troubles, our large joys, our cheerful symposia."†

The last session was spent in Edinburgh under the

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\* "History of a Man," pp. 156, 157.

† *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Rev. Robert Balmer of Berwick-on-Tweed, who with the Rev. John Brown of Broughton Place had been added to the professorial staff. Already, however, our student had become acquainted with the capital. Like many others he supported himself by teaching in the winter months, and Edinburgh had drawn him because, while it afforded a good field for the private tutor, Wilson and Chalmers were to be heard there, and the intellectual activity of the Scottish mind was there at its highest. Describing the period in the history of Edinburgh between 1815 and 1835, Gilfillan says: "During that time has commenced the immortal series of the Waverley Novels. The *Edinburgh Review* is in undiminished force. John Wilson has arrived and is forcing his way toward the immense popularity he is soon to gain. In the chairs of the University, Dugald Stewart, Playfair, Thomas Brown, Leslie, Pillans, and Dalzel are teaching. Andrew Thomson is thundering statedly in the pulpit, and Chalmers is preaching as no one but himself can preach, and is by-and-by to be Divinity Professor. James Hogg is in Gabriel's Road meditating the 'Queen's Wake.' Edward Irving is studying in Bristo Street for the ministry. M'Crie is issuing the 'Life of Andrew Melville,' and attacking 'Old Mortality' with merciless power. *Blackwood's Magazine* has started and is attracting to itself such spirits as Thomas Pringle (at first), J. G. Lockhart, Maginn, Galt, Croly, Delta, and Christopher North, who also in 1820 mounts the Moral Philosophy chair, and takes to him his great power and reigns for more than thirty years; while a profounder if not so brilliant man has been obliged to retire upon the chair of History, whence he by-and-by emerges on that of Logic as the

full fledged and unique Sir William Hamilton. . . . The two Chamberses are laying the slow but sure foundations of their extensive fame and usefulness. . . . In the Dissenting pulpit, besides old Dr. James Peddie and Dr. Hall, two men, very different, but both of no ordinary powers, have appeared in Dr. John Brown and Dr. John Ritchie. In the newspaper Press the *Weekly Journal*, the *Caledonian Mercury*, and above all the manly and liberal *Scotsman* have made their mark. And this last may be considered the *avant-courier* of *Tait's Magazine* which comes to the aid of the Liberal interest in 1832 and rallies round it, besides its energetic publisher, such writers as William Weir, Roebuck, Fonblanque, Mrs. Johnstone, Bowring, Professor Nichol, Robert Nicoll, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, and the wondrous De Quincey. . . .

“Changed is the college from the days when we could pass over from tracing Sir John Leslie in his giant leaps from system to system of the stellar universe, to the class where Wilson was painting scenery with the potent dash of a Salvator Rosa, and analysing the human heart and its intricacies of passion and motive with the clear vision and minute anatomy of a Fielding or a Shakespeare, and thence again to the ‘large upper room’ where Chalmers was discoursing with all the vehemence of the pulpit on theism and anti-theism, Clarke, Hobbes, and Butler, and sometimes snatching up his ‘Astro-nomical Discourses’ and reading a passage from them with the fire and freshness with which he had given it originally, fifteen years before, in the Tron Church of Glasgow; and thence once more to the hall where Sir William Hamilton was spreading out his enormous



treasures of knowledge to an audience, few if fit. It seemed almost as if Plato and Aristotle, and Chrysostom and Copernicus had come down from the higher spheres and alighted beside each other.”\*

Drawn irresistibly to this Edinburgh, one of the poorest of the many poor students who gathered there from year to year, yet with growing intellectual power and ambition, Gilfillan found himself in the outer court of literature. His lodging was with two ladies, Taylor by name, in the second floor of a house in Bristo Street, opening from the “General’s Entry,” so called from General Monk. There at different times William Wylie of Orkney and John Eadie lodged with him, the latter like himself so poor that on one occasion, coming to the city ill, he had to throw himself on Gilfillan’s bounty. Then as always the appeal of a friend was heartily met, for then and always Gilfillan was as lavishly hospitable as a Highland chief. And now the student could hear men whose forms and voices had been long present to his mind. “I first heard Chalmers preach on Sabbath the 9th October, 1831, when introducing Mr. Martin of St. George’s, Edinburgh, to his flock. Through the kindness of a friend who sat in the church, I obtained, although with difficulty, a seat in the very front of the gallery, near a pew in which, on Sabbath, the 8th of February, 1846, I enjoyed a comfortable nap under a sermon from Dr. Brunton. There was no napping that forenoon. I went with excited but uncertain expectations. I had learned to admire the ‘Astronomical Discourses,’ but had no clear or decided view of their author, and was not without certain dissenting

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\* “Edinburgh, Past and Present,” 1886, pp. 91-93.

prejudices against him. Being near sighted, and the morning being rather dim, I could not catch a distinct glimpse of his features. I saw only a dark large mass bustling up the pulpit stairs as if in some dread and desperate haste. I heard next a hoarse voice, first giving out the psalm in a tone of rapid familiar energy, and after it was sung and prayer was over, announcing for text, 'He that is unjust let him be unjust still (*stull* he pronounced it); he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still.' And then like an eagle leaving the mountain cliff, he launched out at once upon his subject, and soared on without any diminution of energy or flutter of wing for an hour and more. . . . Strange as it may seem, neither Wilson nor Chalmers, nor Professor Leslie, nor Dr. Gordon, nor Jeffrey, produced at first on me a tithe of the impression which many country ministers, whose names are extant only in the Lamb's Book of Life, had easily and ineffaceably left."

Of Wilson, into whose class-room he frequently found his way, he says in the "History of a Man:" "I enjoyed the humours of the class as conducted by him and his personal eccentricities exceedingly. His abrupt and fiery entrance; the habit he had of glaring out, at the end of every paragraph, through the window on the right hand side; the watch laid out before him, and, when the lecture was poor, glanced at every five minutes in his impatience to be done. . . . The great man grew on me as I continued to visit his class. I found that what I thought coarseness was simply the shaggy mane of the lion, and that the roar though peculiar was intensely his own, and that if he did not add much to what I had already learned at Glasgow he gave his students what no professor there

could give—the benefits of the inspiration of his own powerful genius.”

The account of a more direct relation to Wilson during student days is thus authentically given: “I came first in contact with him, or rather he came in contact with my writing in a peculiar way. A lad, William Wylie, who was lodging with me in Edinburgh, was attending Wilson’s class. At his request I wrote five essays, including three on Genius which were handed in in Wylie’s name. The professor sent for him and expressed a doubt whether they were his own, adding: ‘I wish I could write as well myself.’ Wylie maintained his claim to their paternity and got a high prize. One of these essays on ‘The Aberrations of Genius’ struck Wilson’s fancy particularly, and he spoke of its being worth printing. I can remember writing nothing with such rapture, such inspiration as that essay. I wrote it chiefly at night after returning from teaching and after swallowing potations of strong tea. Wylie carried all those essays to Orkney with him. After his death (he died early, poor fellow!) I received two or three of them but not the ‘Aberrations.’ I never knew whether Wilson was aware or not of my connection with them.”

Gilfillan’s part in this transaction shows more of his readiness to oblige a needy brother, and his eagerness to find an audience of the great professor, than any less pardonable traits. In poverty and obscurity, goaded rather than sustained by the high opinion of some of his fellow-students who were full of enthusiastic expectations, he saw as yet no way of entrance to the ranks of literature. The praise of Wilson, although snatched unawares, was a great encouragement to a

youth with Gilfillan's ambition, but it did not save him from many a dreary hour of depression and debate. Perhaps, on the other hand, it made him turn on himself, and reconsider with more inquisitorial fierceness his position as a student of theology, and his fitness for the ministry. Evidently his faith while in Edinburgh was mainly in the achievements of the intellect, and religious doubts came again with literary disappointment.

He tells us in the "History,"—and although the question of fact cannot now be settled, the probability of the statement remains—that Wilson's praise led him to copy out some of his essays along with a poem, and send them to a leading periodical. He describes himself sickening with the delay, and receiving, after two months, a reply stating that it might be impossible to print the essays, but asking the writer to call. The initials subjoined to the letter were T. W. which appear to point to William Tait. The pride of Gilfillan took fire, hastily he resolved never to darken the publisher's door. This, then, was to be the end of his bright expectations of literary fame as well as of the pecuniary recompense he needed so much! The agony was absurdly unnecessary, but it was real enough. In the deep depression of the time he reckoned that against the "sea of troubles" he had but two defences—first youth, and secondly the recollection, at least, of a time when he was as serene as he had become sorrowful, as firm in belief as he had become unsettled, of a time when "the candle of the Lord shined" upon him.

But there was work to do. His theological studies and exercises had to be proceeded with; and in one engagement he was peculiarly happy. The charge of



a mission station in the Cross Causeway had fallen to him, and every Sabbath evening he had to address the people who gathered in the humble meeting-place. "While talking to those simple beings amid the darkening shadows of a summer eve about Jesus and the other grand themes of Christianity, my doubts and difficulties seemed to retire, even as the shadows of those objects which darken a stream in its usual channel are unable to reach it when it is up in flood. How often since have I, while addressing large and intelligent audiences, panted and prayed for something of the spirit which breathed on me while speaking to twenty people in the Cross Causeway!"

And, again, a visit to Comrie made a pleasant interlude. His father's successor there, the Rev. James Mitchell (the James Brechin of the "History"), described by him as a man of no little culture, who appeared to have reached the cross over a stony wilderness of doubt, met him with great sympathy. "He accompanied me on my return to Edinburgh as far as where the moors were separated from the hill-side sloping down to the level of Strathearn, by a little bridge. We sat down to rest on the ledge. It was the afternoon of an August day, and the sullen face of the moorlands was all smiling with purple heather, and humming with bees and winged insects of every kind. I had never found him so communicative. He said he had come to Strathearn a disappointed man, and perplexed, moreover, with terrible doubts, but added, 'Blessings on these dark rugged hills (they were towering up to the north-west, like a saw of ebon-coloured iron, distinctly defined against a glowing sky), I would not exchange what I have learned of God, Jesus, man, myself, amid their silent

circuit for ten thousand worlds.' As he wrung my hand in parting, he said 'My dear lad, you may, you must—with your temperament—doubt ; but, for God's sake, never disbelieve, never despair ; and you will come at last to that resolution of your doubts, which only patience, prayer, and peace of conscience can bestow.' He turned rapidly down the valley, and I never saw him again." This seems to have occurred in August, 1834 ; in the course of the following winter Mr. Mitchell died.

A valued friend of Mr. Gilfillan's, the Rev. Alexander Kennedy, Ontario, Canada, who has just passed away, recalls in a communication of date 4th September, 1891, their intimacy as students. "It was my privilege to make the acquaintance of Mr. Gilfillan in the year 1830, at the Theological Hall of the United Secession Church. But our intimacy began in 1832 when we were both resident in Edinburgh, and it continued till 1835, when I left for the West Indies. From that time till his death we corresponded, though somewhat fitfully. A more prompt correspondent than he could not have been desired. I have had a long letter from him, written on the very day that one from me had reached him from beyond the Atlantic. But his practice in this respect rebuked me severely.

"In many respects Mr. Gilfillan was remarkable, even in his student days. His idiosyncrasies awoke expectations concerning his future that taxed possibilities. His fellow-students who were in any measure acquainted with him, gave him credit for possessing very high intellectual power, though he seemed to have little or no desire to excel in class-work. He appeared to be quite content with performing the duties of the class so as to stand fairly well in the

estimation of professor and fellow-students. And this he ever did. He spent a great deal of his time in reading at large, but with a special liking for poetry and fiction. He and John Eadie (afterwards professor in the United Presbyterian Theological Hall) were the most extensively read of all the students; and they read to advantage as each possessed a singularly retentive memory. Mr. Gilfillan read with remarkable rapidity. I have watched him when engaged with a book, and he appeared to be merely running his eyes down page after page, [as if scanning the first sentence of each paragraph; yet he was making the entire contents his own, so much so that he could recall them at pleasure.

“When a student Mr. Gilfillan was of a retiring disposition, though to a stranger he might at times appear to border on brusqueness. Called on to answer a question or to state his opinion, he expressed himself with singular sententious terseness, and he hardly ever spoke either of persons or things in neutral terms. He was incapable of duplicity, ardent in his likes and dislikes. A hater of pretension and sham, he was intensely generous. He might err in judgment and in act, but he could not be a hypocrite.

“In extemporaneous speech he was by no means ready. Once when at an annual meeting between the Secession and Relief Students he was expected to do credit to his hall as one of the speakers, he rose, both hands resting on his staff, and stammered out, ‘Gentlemen!’ paused for a moment or two, and then said with emphasis expressive of a galled spirit, and with a stamp of his staff on the floor, ‘I cannot utter a word.’

“I had frequent Saturday walks with Mr. Gilfillan,

and sometimes on other days also—to me enjoyable in no common degree. The various subjects included in our curriculum as students, ministers and sermons, religious doctrines and duties were discussed; but authors and books were chiefly canvassed. As a critic he wielded an exceedingly free lance; but if he awarded blame it was untarnished by malignity. If our conversation chanced at any time to verge on flatness, I had only to speak disparagingly of the works of those authors whom he specially idolised, Shelley or Carlyle for example. This unfailingly roused my friend and called forth a torrent of indignant rebuke and more than an apologetic defence of the author. Stepping in front of me, and with a stamp of his staff on the ground, he would excitedly exclaim, ‘I say, Ken.!’ and then would follow a Niagara of mingled denunciation and laudation, I the while enjoying his withering rebuke in admiration of the flashes of his genius. And this he would do on the street, regardless of passers-by. I remember an instance that occurred in Leith Walk when a gentleman turned in wonder at our somewhat ludicrous exhibition.”

Mr. Kennedy adds:—“While home in Scotland in 1840, I had the pleasure of visiting Mr. and Mrs. Gilfillan at Dundee. The few days I spent under their roof were crowded with enjoyment. I found him in high health and spirits, the beloved pastor of the Church assembling in School Wynd. It ever was my wish and prayer that he and I might be enabled personally to cling to the Cross, and in our preaching to keep it ever prominently in view. I do trust that through sovereign mercy my departed friend and I will meet in the eternal home of the



redeemed, having been washed in the blood that cleanseth from all sin."

Thus the veteran of eighty-eight concludes, with a pious hope he had conveyed to his friend at intervals for forty years—in letters always valued. On the receipt of one of them in 1863 Mr. Gilfillan makes the following note:—"He was the first of my companions at the Hall who formed sanguine hopes of me. Afterwards we had much pleasant intercourse. He is a man of excellent abilities, genuine heart and piety, although of irritable and highly nervous temperament which the sun of the tropics (he was sometime in Trinidad) considerably exasperated. He says to me in a very fine brotherly spirit, 'My dear friend, let us cling to the Cross and strive to get close to the heart of Him who hung thereon. Let us labour for Christ while life lasts. He is the sole hope of our sin-begloomed and guilt-bemired race. At the end of the day the fame of a faithful servant of Christ will be found to be the best and highest of all fame, and the reward of him who has "well done" in the Lord's work the richest of all rewards.' Dear Ken., I value highly your words and wishes, and feel, I trust, that they are as true as they are friendly."

One other recollection of the period may be given. Speaking of Alexander MacGregor, a native of St. Fillan's, who afterwards became minister of Kilwinning United Secession Church, Mr. Gilfillan writes, in 1875:—"I met him at the Hall and remember some pleasant evenings with him in his lodgings, one especially, in the autumn of 1831, when we had some interesting talk, and I gave an extempore address on the 5th Chapter of 2nd Corinthians,

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he my sole auditor, which I have often wished to revive, but it perished in the utterance. I never thought myself half-inspired but on that evening."\*

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\* Letter to Rev. G. Philp, Saltcoats, quoted in Historical Sketch of Kilwinning United Presbyterian Church, by Mr. R. Wylie.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EARLY MINISTRY, 1835-50.

HIS Theological course completed, George Gillan was "licensed to preach the Gospel" by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in April, 1835. As to his "trials for license," that is to say the sermon and other exercises delivered before the Presbytery, he notes only that some of the clergymen were cold and severe, others genial and liberal. It is clear he was by no means sorry to find his term of life in Edinburgh at an end, although he enjoyed various intellectual opportunities which the city offered. He had never felt at home in Edinburgh, and had spent his last year almost in solitude.

During his *wander-jahr*, when by appointment he passed from church to church, preaching for ministers, or as a candidate in vacancies, he visited the Islands of Bute and Man, went south as far as Liverpool, north as far as Aberdeen. In the autumn he was invited to become minister of the church which had been his father's, no small tribute to one who had grown up amongst the people and been watched through his boyhood with some wonder and doubt. But Comrie, though it always charmed, did not commend itself as a scene of ministerial work; and a

new friendship had, meanwhile, carried his hopes beyond the little church of his nativity.

Familiar to many in one form or other, usually with more or less of legend, is the story of his introduction to the lady who became his wife. In the second week of August, 1835, at Montrose, he made acquaintance with a son of the Rev. Andrew Wilson, and was invited to join him and other friends in a visit to the Burn, a beautiful estate on the North Esk between Fettercairn and Edzell. It was a large party, and they went on foot; first, on Monday as far as the Muirton Secession Manse, and then on Wednesday to the Burn. There is a story that they were taken for a marriage company, and Gilfillan, at the head, in riotous spirits, for the bridegroom. Mr. Valentine, factor of the Burn estate, lived at Bogmuir, and his eldest daughter joined the excursion. They all went back to Bogmuir to tea, and soon after, Margaret Valentine, the second daughter, returned from an engagement. She had been there when they passed in the forenoon, and even then the tall young preacher had noticed her. Meanwhile, a thunderstorm had come on with continued lightning. "I saw the Burn first," says Gilfillan, "as one of a gay party who had thrown for that day all care to the winds, whose merry and innocent laughter was not materially disturbed even when a thunder-storm drove them within doors."

According to another account than his own, George surprised his companions by his singular enjoyment of the storm. He would have the windows uncovered that he might watch the lightning. Bashful as a rule in company, he was for once bold and free; and the night was more than the day. Heavy rain detained



the whole party, and even country hospitality was taxed. Four young men had to share one room, and their uproarious mirth extended into the morning. One of them had a special reason. As he said afterwards, "he had seen her by whom he was taken by storm. God had let down an angel to him on a stair of lightning from heaven." To Margaret, the probationer had looked unkempt and untrained. But she heard him preach next day at Muirton, and it seems even then partly altered her first view. The wooing began with a rush, and, though Gilfillan found something to overcome, he prospered in the end.

The incidents of this month of August are singularly in evidence when searched for. On the 1st of the month Gilfillan travelled by road from Dundee, then of little interest to him, to Forfar, across the valley of Strathmore, admiring for the first time that noble landscape; on the 9th, he was in Montrose preaching for Mr. Hyslop; on the 10th, came the walk to Muirton; on the 12th, the memorable visit to the Burn; on the 13th, the "fast-day" at Muirton, he preached for Mr. Renwick; on the 16th, he was again officiating at Montrose, and on the 17th, retraced the eight miles to Muirton, met Margaret Valentine at dinner and took her home in the evening. On the 23rd, he occupied the pulpit of School Wynd Church, Dundee, then vacant through the removal of the Rev. Alexander Davidson to Edinburgh, the subject of his first sermon being the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The following Sabbath he seems to have been also in Dundee, and about this time he went to Edinburgh expressly to hear Daniel O'Connell, whose great oration on the Calton Hill to an enormous gathering left a warm

and vivid impression. During September the proposal was made to call him to become minister of School Wynd congregation. On the 9th October, he was at Bogmuir, and in the highest spirits went next day to Forfar. But there he learned that the "moderation" in his favour as a candidate had failed. He had just declined the call to Comrie, and the disappointment was great. It was a day "on the brink of the bottomless." On the 22nd December, however, came better tidings and hopes that were not disappointed. He heard, at Douglas, in the Isle of Man, that he had been called by a large majority to School Wynd. All going well, he completed his trials to the satisfaction of the Presbytery of Cupar, sitting at Pitlessie on 23rd February, 1836, and his ordination was fixed for the 23rd March. For those unacquainted with Dundee Secession history, it may be explained that the School Wynd Congregation had been then in existence for ninety years, having had its origin at a time when the Secession movement was reaching northward from Fifeshire. The old ecclesiastical connection still survived, and Mr. Gilfillan accordingly was ordained as a minister of the Cupar Presbytery.

The congregation worshipping in School Wynd Chapel was large, though comparatively poor, and the stipend promised was £220, with a manse; a considerable salary for the time. The promise, too, was good; there was an open door and a wide field, and the young minister addressed himself hopefully to his work. He is remembered still as he then was—a tall and almost gaunt youth, with a high complexion, a quantity of auburn hair gathered into a mass on the top of his head, with

fire in his eye, and impatience on his lip—in the pulpit extraordinarily vehement and using much gesticulation. His sermons were delivered; indeed, they could not possibly have been read in public, written as they were in a manuscript of some ten lines to the inch. He was more of a phenomenon in a Secession pulpit than his people knew; still the most of them admired. For a time his mother was with him in Dundee, then Margaret Valentine came—it was on the 23rd November, 1836—to be a help-meet indeed to him for life. His first year, he records, was uneasy, although youth, hope, and marriage rendered it on the whole happy. Passing rapidly from fervour to gloom, easily elated, easily disheartened, he soon went the round of a minister's experience. Towards the close of the first year he seemed to himself to have lost the popularity with which he began; that is to say, the first excitement had waned. In the following year the tide began to rise; but typhus fever attacked him in the house in Seagate where he lived while the manse was being rebuilt. "For weeks," he says, "I swam for my life, and for three months was absent from my pulpit." Then came recovery, settlement in the new house, Paradise by common appellation, for it stood in Paradise Road, and increasing ministerial power. From 1838 his position was so far assured, and falling into the way of work—or, let us say, having his own way more or less accepted—he could feel himself on his voyage.

The work of ministering to a Secession congregation fifty years ago was to men of a certain kind sufficiently engrossing. One might find his world within the limits of his charge. To understand the



THE MANSE, PARADISE ROAD, DUNDEE.





circles within circles of kinship and acquaintance in the congregation, to please his people by edifying visitation, to keep the agencies in full and successful motion, to find subjects, write and commit discourses ; and, besides, to sustain the character of a "member of Presbytery" with credit in public and private—this might be his whole care, his whole life. Some, however, widened their outlook and interest by taking part in the affairs of the town, and adventuring into literature. And these were not few. Throughout Scotland the Seceders were well in advance, proportionately to their numbers, in public spirit, breadth of sympathy, and intelligence. They would not have been dissenters, indeed, and undertaken to support a ministry of their own unless they had given their minds to large and serious questions, and profited all round by the discipline. They were the steady-going reformers of the time, alert in all political discussions, in temperance and other movements, keen dialecticians within their range, taking more than their share of honourable work on public boards. It was not uncommon for the few Secession congregations in a Scottish town to supply at one time half the bailies and perhaps a third of the council. The ministers, therefore, were not restrained from seeking wide influence and usefulness.

It was, however, Gilfillan's peculiarity, almost from the first, that he was broader, less disposed to occupy himself with small details, more secular, it might perhaps be said, than his co-presbyters—in other words, more a man of the world. While others resisted the splendid lure of poetry and fiction, he could not ; while they could live within a creed, he could not. His preaching, always honest and out-

spoken, was founded squarely on the great corner-stones of evangelical truth ; but he was deeply aware of shadows through which he had himself passed—not shadows of an evil unbelief, but of ignorance—and he had the desire to make religion free where it was timorous and open where it was still suspicious. The conservatism of a Church could not bind him, could not control the courage of his heart. True, he was not equipped to be a reformer of theology. He had not science enough for a pioneer of interpretation, reconstruction, and judgment. Yet to him, as he was, a call came. Necessity was laid upon him by the fervid nature of his mind and the fierce initiations of his youth. And it was from no want of piety, but rather from the sense of an obligation to truth and to God those utterances sprang which by-and-by made him appear to many a perilous guide, if not a rebel from the faith.

For a time Gilfillan found, as a preacher, sufficient room for his intellectual energy and the use of his literary stores. It was a happy change from the vague unsettled life of the student and probationer to the healthy engagements of the pastorate and the quiet routine of a well-ordered home. The manse was always a hospice for many friends ; yet the new conditions tended to calm his restless nature and guide his powers in a channel of steady endeavour. And this first period may be said to have ended in the opening of 1840 with the publication of his "Five Discourses." Perhaps that venture was itself a symptom of restlessness, and it is significant that in the previous September when in Edinburgh he first met De Quincey. "I was introduced," he wrote, "to the celebrated Opium-Eater, and spent two nights with

him. He is the most extraordinary specimen of humanity I ever met with." Did those nights with the "pale, woe-begone little man" revive a smouldering fire?

The "Five Discourses" show no trace of doctrinal impatience, although for the time they were novel and bold. Often expressed in the exuberant style of a young orator who found his audience responsive to the crudities of speech rather than to fine discriminations, they run along very unusual lines of figure and fancy; at the same time their orthodoxy is blameless. The author's sympathy with the imaginative flights of Byron and Shelley appears as pity for their untoward scepticism, their revolt from Christianity. One of the discourses, on "Not many wise men after the flesh are called," speaks of Churchill "reeking with debauch and scoffing at the faith which he once preached till he could scoff nor speak no longer"—of Byron, "an unsolved, splendid, entombed riddle"—of Shelley, to whom he cries, "What ailed thee, O great but misled spirit, against Him who had so bountifully enriched thee?" and judgment is given in sombre certainty: "The soul shudders as it looks forward to the eternity of a great ruined mind, acting for ever, but acting as a scourge, lashing itself to deeper and deeper agony . . . remembering for ever the raptures which have been succeeded by the horror of horrors, the blackness of darkness."

Even during this period, however, while Gilfillan kept his thought and work within accredited lines, he was yielding anew to the attraction of that world of literature from which, in the first years of his ministry, he had partially withdrawn. In 1839, he contributed articles on Chalmers and Professor Wilson to the



*Edinburgh University Magazine*, brief but germinal. Then, also, his acquaintance with Thomas Aird was assuming more consequence and opening a door he was not slow to enter. In the columns of the *Dumfriesshire and Galloway Herald*, of which Aird was editor, he began, in 1840, to say, with almost perfect freedom, of literary men and things, what was inadmissible in the pulpit.

The friendship began in 1837, when Aird visited Dundee to attend the funeral of a brother, who had been a member of School Wynd Church. He was at that time thirty-five years of age, already an author of repute and an acknowledged poet, although his "Devil's Dream on Mount Aksbeck" had not yet appeared. "A strong man, of a tall and handsome person, with a beautiful head and striking presence," he had something classical, Grecian one would say, both in his countenance and in his mind. He was like a Greek athlete who, in opening manhood, had bent himself with rigour to the task of the academy. Gilfillan was drawn to him as a literary elder brother, whose friendship with Thomas Carlyle and John Wilson gave him a high place in the guild, and still more by his wise warm character and engaging frankness. Altogether, it was a day of good augury to Gilfillan when he found this friend, whose encouragement and counsel were to be his for nearly forty years. At the same time, the acquaintance he made with Aird, so early in his ministry, had the disadvantage of forcing somewhat the harvest which, if it had ripened more slowly, would have yielded finer grain. The opportunity of publication given, Gilfillan dashed into portraiture with an eagerness that was really fierce. Once started on the new career, he threw off,

month after month, sketches that startled the Scottish world. His early dreams were now fulfilling themselves ; he, like those he had worshipped, was finding audience for thoughts that had slumbered long. Ambition spurred him, and with that he felt the sharp goad of need—a goad without which power often sleeps. The exchequer of the church was low. The stipend, reduced from the original sum, was not always forthcoming. How to live became the question. Though the *Dumfries Herald* could afford no fee to a literary writer, it was more than a step on the ascent ; and Gilfillan mounted.

He wrote rapidly, with the force and fulness of one to whom writing was a new delight. His sermon making was swift. Of one Sabbath's work there is a clear reminiscence. On a Saturday, in 1842, he reached home straight from the side of a little grave. He could write nothing, though he tried again and again. In the morning, after an early breakfast, he took the pen, and the forenoon discourse was finished in time. Returning, he set to work again, and finished a second, which was delivered in the afternoon. There was a third service—and the third discourse was written and preached in its turn. This was the heat he threw into literary work. It was improvisation ; but the improvisation of one whose thinking had been done beforehand. Towards the close of 1840 Aird wrote him : "You have made a great stride forward since you published your sermons ; and, let me tell you once for all, you have helped me greatly to establish a literary character for the *Herald*." Yet the rapidity meant fault. In the same letter Aird says that he takes the liberty of suppressing two or three sentences in an article, where, "in the

fervour of fast and immediately-sent-off composition," Gilfillan seems to have "unconsciously touched the borders of the too daring." The sketches sent thus, in hot succession, to Aird's paper formed the substance of the first "Gallery of Literary Portraits," published in 1845.

Added to De Quincey's and Aird's, a third friendship, begun in 1841, gave Gilfillan a great intellectual impulse. In Edinburgh, early in the year, he met Samuel Brown, then the close companion of the brilliant Edward Forbes, and himself already of some note in science and society. Of the stock of the Haddington Browns, a grandson of the old Professor, cousin of John Brown of "Rab and His Friends," and brother of John Croumbie Brown, whose fine poetical epistles came in those days to the manse at Paradise Road, Dr. Samuel Morrison Brown, the young chemist, was a fervid and fascinating personality. Slender and dark, not unlike Brougham in feature, "he had a pale, sickly, but expressive face, immense elasticity of body, a voice not strong but musical, which, as he went on, became tremulous with impassioned enthusiasm, and a manner in which you did not know whether more to admire the abandonment and impulse, the torrent and tempest of feeling, or the taste and temperance which gave the whirlwind an aspect of 'smoothness.'"<sup>\*</sup> At their first meeting the "Alchymist," as Brown was familiarly called, made a deep impression on Gilfillan, who also, by his contrasted power—a ruder energy and more devouring fire—and by his faith and love gave full return. "I repeated to him," says Gilfillan, "Aird's 'Devil's

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<sup>\*</sup> "History of a Man," p. 203.

Dream on Mount Aksbeck,' a poem which he had never seen. One line in it especially struck him and continued, he said afterwards, to haunt him for years, while pursuing his dim and perilous way through the abyss of scientific research—

“‘The silent magnanimity of Nature and her God.’

‘I should love the man,’ he wrote, ‘although he had never written another line.’” \* In July Brown visited the manse in Dundee, and the friends had an excursion together into the nearer Highlands. Both were enthusiastic lovers of nature, although in quite different ways. A few of the letters addressed to the “Alchymist,” from Dundee, are given further on, and the recollection of his fascinating society survived the friendship and the life. “Come back to our memory as thou wert in thy hot youth, thy heart boiling with enthusiasm, thy brain throbbing with bright and new imaginations, thy tongue touched with fire—as always when ‘men gathered around thee, and the stars came out’—Samuel Brown, chymist, philosopher, orator, and poet! and let us hear again thy beautiful accents, soft as woman’s, yet strong in the vigour of manly youth, warbling their wondrous story through the deepening shadows, and the solemn starry silence of those charmed autumnal eves.” †

Brown came repeatedly to Dundee as a lecturer to the Watt Institution, in which Gilfillan took a long and active interest, and on the occasion of those lectures he was always a guest at the manse. His

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\* *Scottish Review*, 1857, p. 293.

† *Ibid.*, p. 297.



subjects were : The Atomic Theory of Nature (1842) ; The Law of Polarity and Mesmerism (1847) ; five on the Idea of Magnetism (1848) ; A Course on the History of Chemistry (1850). In the last lecture of this course there seemed, says Gilfillan, "a certain pathetic tone, as if he were half conscious that he was to appear in this scene of his many triumphs no more. He had probably many more intelligent audiences in other places than in Dundee ; but by none was he welcomed with more uniform and unbounded enthusiasm."

The lectures given by Mr. Gilfillan to the Watt Institution during this period may be named. In the session of 1839-40, he filled the place of some other speaker with an "eloquent and powerful address" (so the official report) on The Immortality of the Soul ; in 1840-41 he gave A Short Survey of the Literature of the Present Age ; in February, 1844, two lectures on the Reconciliation of Astronomy with Scripture ; in December, 1844, On the Relation of Religion to Poetry and to Painting (two lectures) ; in January, 1845, On the Relation of Religion to Painting (2nd) and the Relation of Religion to Music. The same month he gave an address on The Wonders of Geology. In 1846, he delivered five lectures on Modern British Literature ; and an Introductory Address on Books : their Uses and Abuses ; in 1847, one on the Genius of Byron, and a Review of Our Past Literature as Influencing our Present ; and in 1848, two on the Genius of Milton.

The Report for 1846 contains the following :—  
"To the Rev. George Gilfillan the Directors feel themselves deeply indebted for the very hearty and handsome manner in which he acceded to their

wishes, by delivering a highly valuable course of lectures on Modern British Literature. From the success which attended the delivery of the lectures the Directors were gratified to find that their members, and the public in general, had so well appreciated the ability and literary acumen of that distinguished gentleman." Thus within his tenth year in the ministry, Gilfillan had found in Dundee a place of high regard as a man of public spirit and unusual, indeed pre-eminent, literary influence. And far beyond Dundee, through the publication of his first Gallery of Literary Portraits, and in *Hogg's Instructor* and *Tait's Magazine* of many brilliant sketches and reviews, his name stood for that of a new and glowing personality.

Henceforth to the close of his life, Gilfillan gave his service readily on public occasions alike as preacher and lecturer. But lecturing effort was felt by him, at an early stage, to be on the whole unprofitable. Literary success did not harmonise with that of the popular orator. Again and again he bade farewell to the platform, and again and again recalled his resolution. In some districts, the north-east of England for example, he came to be looked for every year, and was greeted with unfailing interest and enthusiasm. No other Scotsman could command audiences like his beyond the Tweed, as well as north of it. He knew this and was gratified. At the same time he was able to give needed help to many a struggling fellow-minister, and he went on lecturing and preaching because he loved to serve his friends.

Returning on the decade, a great loss of the year 1842 made that season very dark to him. Always

delighting in children, though he had none of his own, Gilfillan's affections were closely entwined with one child-life. Mrs. Gilfillan's youngest sister, Agnes Valentine, was his dear little friend. A quaint, vivacious, loving creature, she had a peculiar wise insight into his moods, a taking *naïveté* touched with sauciness that won his fancy. Between them more than any two in the genial circle of Bogmuir there was a tender understanding which never failed. "Her brow was prominent, pale as marble and nobly expanded; her cheek in exercise or motion often flushing up through its paleness into a rich roseate hue; her voice, clear, sweet, none the less for its Norland accent; and her step light, airy, and swift as a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains." Very pathetically, in a passage written immediately after the death of little Agg, and also in the "History," is given the story of their friendship and the sad close. "She was my playfellow when cheerful, my comforter when sad; her artless yet piercing prattle at once soothed and roused my mind; and assuredly, amid all the 'chambers of my imagery,' I have never had an idol like her whose premature loss I continue bitterly, yet submissively, to deplore." These words were written thirteen years after her death. His visits to Fettercairn were never complete without a visit to the grave.

His mind thus sorrowfully bent to thought upon death by the loss of the child, Gilfillan must needs utter himself. In October of the same year a fruit of his meditations, with some flavour of angry revolt against limiting theories, appeared in the "Discourse on Hades; or, the Unseen." It excited an amount of interest, criticism, and abuse, which may seem in-

credible to the race of to-day. The sermon contained little more than a simple line of speculation, varying in no essential point from the Westminster Confession. The anxious care with which appeal was made to the letter of Scripture, the distinct refusal of the Roman Catholic dogma of purgatory, the endeavour at every stage of the argument to conciliate those who recoiled from doctrinal novelty remove the whole, one would think, from any charge of audacity. In one passage only could the boldness of the preacher have even seemed to run into a perilous demand for liberty. But modern readers will smile when they read it, so thoroughly does the claim agree with the mind of thoughtful Christendom. "Though I respect the Shorter Catechism highly, and hold it to contain the great outlines of the truth of God, and am ready still further to subscribe to almost all its *ipsissima verba*, I do not consider myself bound, nor do I ever design to bind others, to its every jot of clause and tittle of word, to its every plait of phraseology and minute shade of distinction. Those who would thus strap me down by such innumerable ligaments to such a panting and breathless belief make me a slave, not a man. . . . They would endow an earthly document with the most odious pretended quality of the Papal power, infallibility, and exalt a compilation of human minds to the level of the immediate and fire-breathing syllables of Divine Inspiration."

One who now wrote in this strain would be regarded as standing firmly on the "impregnable rock." But his claim alarmed the church of that day. Pamphlet followed pamphlet in criticism and rebuke; recantation was called for. Yet the battle was not fought out. In a long speech to the Presbytery, Mr. Gilfillan



is described in the minutes as having made some "candid concessions and explanations," which were deemed satisfactory. His friends had been talking to him—Samuel Brown and others. An impulsive man is more easily persuaded than another that he has given cause for offence. Though he provoked so much opposition, he felt it keenly, and was glad to bring the matter to an end so far. But his thought had to some extent delivered itself, and was not recalled.

Principal Tulloch, writing in 1877 of the new theological freedom in Scotland, said that "the main influences which were educating the youthful Scottish mind in the decade of years which followed the Secession of 1843 were to a large extent outside both the Universities and the Church ;"\* and Mr. Gilfillan is merely mentioned in reference to a later time. But the freedom which, from 1843, Gilfillan continued to claim, and was tacitly allowed, of treating the Scriptures from a literary as well as a religious point of view was unquestionably the great element of his distinction and popularity in Scotland. Sydney Dobell saw clearly and indicated the outstanding features of Gilfillan's work—those which commended him far and wide to the eager minds of the time—when, reviewing the "Galleries of Literary Portraits" in the *Palladium* (July, 1850) he wrote: "Here is an orthodox divine who proclaims that 'a powerful cause of our recent refined scepticism may be found in the narrow, bigoted, and unworthy notions of Christianity which prevail, in the obstinacy with which they are retained, and in the contrast thus presented to the

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\* *Contemporary Review*, vol. xxix. p. 537.

liberal and fluent motion of the general age.' . . . Here is a philosopher, the friend of Carlyle, the panegyrist of Emerson, sitting and in his right mind at the feet of Christ. Here is a man burning in zeal, adamant in faith, but who steps out to spiritual combat with the difficulties of the day, crying, 'It will not do now to skulk from the field under a flight of nicknames. It will not do to call our opponents miscreants and monsters. While we state their doubts, let us pity the pain and sorrow, amounting almost to distraction and despair, which attend them; and let us inquire, if we have no difficulties, may it not be because we have never thought at all.' . . . Here is one who has been on the heights and into the depths of doubt, and everywhere finds them peopled by men and brothers; who has dived into the mines of disbelief, where the eye of the indweller has lost capacity for sunshine—has stood in that mount of confusion where the sight is blinded with bare light, and with the calm, clear voice of sympathy lays bare the hearts of their inhabitants—the sceptic of the eighteenth and the sceptic of the nineteenth centuries. Here is a comprehensive believer in God and in man who asks in hope and hails in love every human effort to solve the great problems of the earth—who feels that 'to believe in man is an indispensable requisite to a proper conception of Deity'—but looks for their highest solution to that 'unearthly advent for which the weary world and wearier Church are beginning to pant with unutterable groanings.' "

Not from the comfortable seat of an easy incumbency did Gilfillan deliver his judgments of men and their beliefs, but from a vessel tossed with storm, often

apparently among the breakers. His public appearances were those of a very popular man, but there was much in the circumstances of his life to gall a proud spirit. The petty monetary cares his soul loathed were thrust upon him. He disagreed with many from whose dogmatism he could not escape ; he could not school himself to silence. All the more wonderful is it that his theology was so humane, that he continued a passionate lover of men, while he held his high solitary way testifying on behalf of that religion of the future which he found for himself in the Gospel. Those who heard and praised him knew little of the trials he endured. "The year 1843," he writes, "was one of dark struggle, misery, and almost derangement of mind. That year I met Carlyle in Dumfries and found him great, friendly, but on the whole a miserable comforter. The close of the year fell with awful and almost hopeless darkness on my prospects." "Sartor Resartus" had fallen into his hands about this time, and writing of it in the "First Gallery" he gives a picture of his own inner state, for the substantial truth of which he afterwards vouches. "Whoever has struggled with doubts and difficulties almost to strangling—whoever has covered with his cloak a Gehenna of bitter disappointment and misery, and walked out nevertheless firm, and calm, and silent, among his fellow-men—whoever has mourned for 'all the oppressions which are done under the sun,' and been mad 'for the sight of his eyes which he did see,'—whoever has bowed down at night upon his pillow in belief that he was the most wretched and God-forsaken of men—whoever has felt 'all the wanderer in his soul,' and a sense of the deepest solitude, even when mingling in the business and the crowded thoroughfares of his

kind—. . . whoever has at last attained, not happiness, not assurance, but child-like submission, child-like faith and meek-eyed "blessedness" — let him approach, and study, and press to his heart, and bedew with his tears 'Sartor Resartus,' and bless the while its brave and true-hearted author." Gilfillan turned fiercely against Carlyle and Carlyleism afterwards. The impression of the time remains, however, as part of his life.

With the year 1844, "things mended considerably." With growing prosperity in the town and congregation he lifted up his head. The hope of publishing his portraits, encouraged by Aird and Brown and aided to the best of their ability by both in the face of galling difficulties, gave him a new impulse. "In 1845 things were still better, and near the end of it my first 'Gallery' was published by Tait. Its success was gratifying. In 1846 I lectured for the Philosophical Institution (Edinburgh), sooth to say, with little success. My literary reputation was however steadily rising, although the year was sadly chequered. In 1847 I lectured in England and visited London. Returning, my nervous system received on 24th July a shock from which I did not fully recover for years. 1848 was on the whole a white year. I wrote a good deal for *Tait* and *Hogg*; my congregation was steadily increasing; the autumn was divinely beautiful, and in December I had rather an *enclatant* visit to London and lecture in Exeter Hall. 1849 was a glowing season till near the close. My wife fell ill; cholera was in the country and the town, and my own system, injured by a fall from a horse, not very sound. I visited Dumfries again this season and enjoyed Aird much. I published the



'Second Gallery,' which was very well received in the winter. In 1850 there were various changes and misadventures; but in the end of it I published my 'Bards of the Bible,' which became exceedingly popular."

This rapid outline, quoted from a private manuscript, is filled in to a great extent by the letters which follow, and also by passages in the Journal referring to incidents of the time. In addition some brief particulars may be given.

Gilfillan's first meeting with Carlyle was at Dumfries in 1843, "on one of the most glorious days of that most glorious autumn." From Mrs. Aitkin's tea-table, where Aird and Gilfillan were guests with Thomas Carlyle, the three men walked to a point above Dumfries, commanding a view of the valley of the Nith. In the thick and slumbrous light of the autumn evening "inspiration seemed to stoop down on Carlyle from the sky." He spoke much of his own private experience, particularly of one journey to Edinburgh, when after travelling all the day, with no company save the great dumb 'monsters of mountains,' he rested at a little way-side inn and lay down that night 'the most miserable being under God's heaven.'" On the way home the friends passed Burns' house and "gave it the worship of silence." The evening was spent in Thomas Aird's house, Carlyle speaking of his favourite German writers. Next evening the same company walked together by the Nith, and in the moonlight Carlyle "monologised" on Coleridge, the formalism of religion, and the necessity of its genuine revival.

A month afterwards, Carlyle was visiting Mr. Erskine of Linlathen and with him called on Gilfillan

in Dundee. The visit was brief as Carlyle was on his way to the London steamer.

The third meeting was not till 1847. In the interval Gilfillan had heard occasionally from Carlyle and been indebted to him for personal kindness and attention, "which made the visit more that of a grateful friend than of a distant admirer." Calling at Cheyne Row, Gilfillan was fortunate in finding both Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, while Dr. John Carlyle afterwards dropt in. The talk began with Chalmers, who was just dead and had been a visitor not long before his sudden removal. Carlyle spoke also of "Festus," which he would not praise; of Tennyson, whom he admired; of O'Connell, regarding whom he was pointed and severe; and when Gilfillan left for Islington the two brothers went with him a considerable way.

Next, on 19th December, 1848, after visiting Mary Howitt and Leigh Hunt—whose "old, genial nature was shining out through dulness and decay"—Gilfillan saw Carlyle at Chelsea, again found him cordial, and the talk was of Chalmers, Irving, and Brougham.

Finally, in 1850, Gilfillan writes: "I spent a forenoon lately with Thomas Erskine and Thomas Carlyle on the brink of the German Ocean [walking out from Linlathen]. It was fine to find their deep and eternal dissimilarities mellowed and softened into harmony, and to hear the concert formed between the meek, low voice of the one and the strong, yet still and melancholy accents of the other. It was the flute accompanying the sea. I could not thoroughly sympathise with either, but I loved and—shall I add?—pitied both. I suspect I was repaid in kind."

Gilfillan believed that the publication of his "Bards

of the Bible," in which he prefers Bunyan to Sartor, provoked the displeasure, and perhaps the contempt, of Carlyle. At all events, when Dobell met Carlyle at Malvern in 1852, although Gilfillan sent a message there was no response. And the alienation of feeling and of opinion ran afterwards on Gilfillan's side into a vehement and whole-souled attack on the Carlylean gospel, with such a force of dogmatism and such oracular vigour of style, matching Sartor's own, that sympathy or accord henceforth in almost any form became impossible. What the "Bards of the Bible" hinted, "Christianity and Our Era" plainly affirmed, and in a sense demonstrated, that Carlyle's "savage and barbarous" tests of human worth were out of key with any gospel for men. So Gilfillan broke away in utter sincerity, still admiring, however, the rugged, penetrating genius he would no longer allow to dominate his mind.

In February, 1848, Mr. and Mrs. Gilfillan had the pleasure of entertaining Emerson when he visited Dundee. The great American, whose praises had been published in the first "Gallery," was received with all the honour and kindness due to him as a unique thinker and a stranger, and Gilfillan risked not a little in his honour. His lectures on the "Spirit of the Times" and "Eloquence" were finely noticed in the second "Gallery," and so far as his private life was concerned, no word was written there or elsewhere that could offend. In return for his attention and friendly offices to his guest, Mr. Gilfillan received a copy of Emerson's next work. In the "English Traits" Samuel Brown was named and thanked. Modesty, perhaps, kept Emerson from naming Dundee and his panegyrist there.

Into the Anti-Slavery movement Gilfillan threw himself with his whole heart, and his church—George's Chapel as it was called—was on the 10th March, 1846, the scene of an extraordinary meeting at which Frederick Douglass outdid himself in the boldness of his charges against those whom he held faithless to the cause of liberty. Gilfillan's speech reflected the intense excitement of the time. In a heated assembly he was apt to pour himself out in eulogy or protest as the case might be ; in this case indignation flowed like lava, and scorched. Many still alive will no doubt remember how the cities of Scotland were roused by the whole discussion, and how, in 1853, Mrs. Stowe was greeted everywhere with the eloquence and fervour of the country. At her reception in Dundee Gilfillan was of course conspicuous. The city did nothing in those days without him.



## V.

### EARLIER WRITINGS.

THE little papers on Professor Wilson and Dr. Chalmers that stole into the *Edinburgh University Magazine* in the latter part of the year 1839 were the first notes in literature of a strong voice. In September of that year, Gilfillan, preaching in Edinburgh, met De Quincey, and had two nights of the opium-eater's "sublime gossip." He felt a rare and subtle charm; he has conveyed it to those who never saw De Quincey, or heard the "small, thin, yet piercing voice winding out subtleties of thought and feeling in long and strange sentences, evolving like a piece of complicated music." At that time, he says, De Quincey, after long absence from the arena of *Blackwood's Magazine*, had leaped down upon it again. Is it not likely that Gilfillan, the younger, warmer-blooded man, conscious of his own mental boldness, would say to himself, even while he sat fascinated beside the learned dreamer:—"For me, also, there is a place, could I but find it, in this rich and glorious realm where imagination and enthusiasm, knowledge and philosophy intermingle their fires, and the smoke of their sacrifice goes up to God continually." There is one faculty which a man, when he has it, can never mistake; nor does it betray

him—the power of intellectual apprehension. Men may dream of themselves as philosophers, hope of themselves as poets, painters, administrators ; but one who has the eyes of the mind, strong and straight-set in his head, knows that it is so with him, and that he is entitled to look the world in the face and record his judgment. Gilfillan had this unwarped vision, and especially where he found the men of his own immediate time expressing themselves, their views of life. With an essential truthfulness that one admires the more as one enters the more into Gilfillan's work, he launched himself into *Judgment of Men*, their nature, their moral and mental character, their mortal and immortal "passions." He frequently used that word ; it is significant of himself and his own enterprise. When he made his rush into literature in 1840 with the articles for Aird's paper, he put himself in comparison with De Quincey, and more especially with Hazlitt and Macaulay, just where these appeared beyond rivalry, holding their own unapproached way. He had subjects of his own—Irving, Foster, and others ; but there were not enough of these ; he seized upon the great names of general literature—Shelley, Coleridge, Byron—already painted by Hazlitt and De Quincey ; upon De Quincey and Hazlitt themselves ; and while the praise of style, and most of what is implied in style, has to be allowed to them, Gilfillan quite makes good his pretension. He had something of his own to report, and he gave it with native force and freedom. He had neither the cosmopolitan riches of the great literary trader, nor the practical touch of artistic fingers full of nerve, nor the fine classic tone that lingers for ever about such a passage as that in which

Hazlitt makes you read Congreve with him in the quaint old inn-parlour at Alton, while coffee steams in a silver pot, and "the flavour of Congreve's style prevails over all." There is nameless magic in this and many another bit, as there is—though differently distilled—in De Quincey's fluid amber of curious learning and half-impertinent "monologising." Gilfillan came with a certain rural tone which never left him ; a blunt, half-disdainful positiveness, giving his own personal impression, and pouring it out with haste like a stream "in spate." Is it too much to say that there was more of the French Revolution, that is, of the new age and the delivery of the human mind, in his first "Gallery of Literary Portraits" than in all Hazlitt? The young minister in Dundee, with his weekly sermons to compose, usually two and often three, with his sick people and sorry people to visit, his meetings and lecturings, his intimacy with all kinds of common human experience—had neither the time nor the gift to be a finished essayist. But he was very much alive ; his passion for life was hardly second to that of Robert Burns. When he turned to criticism, he seized upon some man, looked at his work as an utterance of him, and threw himself into the whole as a humane production. Here lay the freshness and the strength of Gilfillan's interpretations, and here he still remains unsurpassed. You will go to others for rich and delicate infiltration of light through a subject. He illustrates Men, not Subjects. His writings are not so much literature as life itself, the material and object of literature. After all, vitality is the main point everywhere and always. When the reckoning is made stern, the first point and the last point is—how much life?

Now, during Gilfillan's ascending period, say from 1840 to 1855, he discharged into the literary and religious atmosphere a very considerable quantity of ozone from his own mountain-reared nature. Not Carlyle himself was more a centre of interest and authority than Gilfillan was for many years. The author of "The French Revolution" had powers more massive and more disciplined ; his commanding position in London made him a prophet to men of high standing, while George Gilfillan's ministry was exercised partly among wide ranks of the less vocal multitude, partly among thinking young men and women of the middle classes over Britain and America, partly among the brilliant scattered ones who are but now coming fully to their own offices of interpreter, poet, and preacher in this end of the century.

It was a broken ministry, as he well knew, and there were many hours in his life when he asked, sadly enough, why it had been appointed to him. This note will be caught often in the journal that helped to beguile rather than occupy the later years in which, as he often repeats, he was still possessed of full intellectual vigour and desire. Yes ; it was a divided ministry ; and it was so partly because his religious conscience was quick and operative. For a man of his temperament, Gilfillan was wonderfully disciplined on the moral side. His sudden flares of temper went down as suddenly at the touch of a loving hand—especially one hand, which could do as it would with him. His proud, hot soul, lavish in all things, took guidance more and more, as the years went by, from the chosen companion and helper. It was because he recognised that her qualities were the exact complement of his own ;



and he gave to affectionate counsel what no man could extort from him in fight. This applies further. He was ambitious : frankly desirous of large influence, and rejoicing in it. But he held himself under a yoke of duty to the people who had called him in his youth, and to the church from which he had his father and mother and many a holy memory. Once or twice, in excitement, he wrote hastily (and, it would appear, with singular illegibility) of leaving the Church. He never came near doing that in reality. At all events, there is almost no evidence that he could have so broken his life in two.

Gilfillan examined himself with the candour he used towards other men, and he made no hazardous experiments for the sake of ambition. He recognised that in the great affairs of life a man must owe something to the environment, to the accepted charge, to the honoured companion ; he recognised that for such a man as he was God gives safety in giving conventional duty ; and even at the height of his literary exertions and fame, when a host of aspiring souls turned toward "Gilfillan" with their hopes of life and achievement, even then he remained where he was, preaching the gospel in a provincial city, and leaving with God the answer to his own restless desire.

The faults of his literary manner are evident. It must be remembered how he wrought and where. He was practically alone nearly all his life, both as a *littérateur* and a preacher, his hand against many a man's while his heart was fuller than most of humane sympathy and purpose. Literature is a jealous god, and Mr. Gilfillan's position of solitude was as much against his development on one side as the life of a

nonconformist minister was against it on another. He was at once too much alone and too much engaged. But what was damaging to him as a thinker and writer was no reproach to him. The reproach lies elsewhere—with literary men despising one whose native powers of head and heart were of an order altogether above theirs, and with ministers and laymen of Scottish churches who knew a little of his heresy, all his imprudence, and next to nothing of his large warm conservatism.

Isolation was not a congenial state to Gilfillan, though he did at times enthrone himself in it gloomily. His journal shows depression, dissatisfaction, even now and then the old fierceness ; but it is entirely free of cynicism. He was in one sense a disappointed man—as regards literature that may frankly be allowed, with some proviso—but he was never an embittered man. The great engagement of his soul with religion saved him there. Men might fail ; Christ could not ; and the affairs of Christ's kingdom included alike the success and the failure of His servants. Gilfillan's heart remained, not at rest, but acquainted with hope ; and he compares well in respect of disposition with many men of genius. Often moody, he was never mean ; often crude and unseasoned in speech and writing, he was never coarse in thought ; while whispered detraction, cool malice, calculating mischief, were beyond his comprehension, not in his region at all. There was always something leonine about him—in his personal appearance, which from his prime became very striking—the broad poise of the head upon the shoulders, the bold look of the prominent eyes, the haughty aquiline strength of the face, as of the eagle and lion in Ezekiel's dream of human power.

These things were an index to the demonstrative unsuspiciousness of the soul and its restless outlook. Here was a man who emphatically lived, who honourably lived, and though he suffered still called life good. He loved the poets and nature and all great ideas with a deep and glorious passion ; he loved the heart in the human breast and God who gave it. This poet-life of his roared through all his writings, every article he published, every sermon he preached, almost every tea-meeting speech—all the utterances that made him felt near and far. Wherever there was a man there was one who might partake the free joy of intellectual passion, the sense of “something interfused,” and to him Gilfillan called as to a fellow and equal, a son of the Highest. He would have all men and women, even the little children listen with their own ears to the voice of nature and of God in nature, he would have every man and woman a poet. They were not to lodge in the commonplace, but to scale the heights. For himself, he rose on wings not always eagle-strong, saw with eyes not always eagle-clear. He knew that ; but he showed the way, showed it bravely and not without royalty in his own flight toward the empyrean. God was there, and God was the Alpha and Omega of Life.

Men felt the rush and the glow. Carlyle felt it ; Emerson felt it ; after and with them many a bright bounding spirit and a grateful multitude of those whom the commonplace had well-nigh buried. Let Gilfillan have his right—his hope. He was a prophet whose burden was the terrible joy of existence, the God-given fire of pure passionate intellect. Burns left unspoken a message which Gilfillan, with the clean lips of a chaste man, and the flaming judgment of a religious

man essayed to render. If it might have been better given, so, assuredly, might the word spoken by Burns; yet we prefer to think how much we owe, rather than how little, to the poet of the passionate will. To endorse and justify the sense of debt is the province of critical biography, and where Gilfillan rendered in his sphere may it be rendered to him again! His function peculiarly, was the Christian—that's really the vital—interpretation of the man of genius as poet, patriot, prophet; and if one considers the variety of his own personal temperament and sympathy, his intimacy with the toiling multitude as well as with the man of thought, his peculiar gift of establishing the great ideas of religion out-of-doors under the open sky among the liberators of the race, his affectionate family life as a man, his unselfish laborious life as a citizen and clergyman—certainly one has to ask whether, in certain respects, he stood far below Carlyle. At any rate, no one knew better than Gilfillan the nature and the responsibility of genius, the eternal youth and eternal appetite of the soul. Those who as young fellows, in the forties of our century, caught a brand from his fire, have no need to be ashamed now of their enthusiasm or their priest.

Writing in January, 1844, to Emerson, Carlyle said:—"Did you receive a Dumfries newspaper with a criticism (of me) in it? The author is one Gilfillan, a young dissenting minister in Dundee, a person of great talent, ingenuousness, enthusiasm and other virtues; whose position as a preacher of bare old Calvinism under penalty of death sometimes makes me tremble for him. He has written in that same newspaper about all the notablest men of his time;



Godwin, Corn-Law Elliott, and I know not all whom ; if he publish the book I will take care to send it you. I saw the man for the first time last autumn at Dumfries. As I said, his being a Calvinist dissenting minister, economically fixed and spiritually with such germinations in him, forces me to be very reserved with him."

The spiritual germinations so evident to Carlyle, could not fail to strike in with his own. It was, as he said to Aird, a nature kindred with his that gave a view of him and of other "notablest" men in the Dumfries newspaper. The well-known words may be set down here in their connection:—"It is a noble panegyric—a picture painted by a poet: which means with me a man of insight and of heart; decisive, sharp of outline, in hues borrowed from the sun. It is rare to find oneself so mirrored in a brother's soul."\*

True, they differed afterwards as we have seen, when "The Bards of the Bible" gave hint of Gilfillan's move on into sharp criticism and opposition. And probably there was not wanting the assistance of private gossip to inflame contempt. Gilfillan was never prudent—nor was Carlyle. Nevertheless, the first testimony stands, from one whose mental eyesight was terribly strong, that here he found a brother in thought and feeling.

Naturally, a writer situated as Gilfillan was, had to write of what lay in his memory and possession. He could not choose the best subject and retire with a parcel of books to a Winterslow Hutt, like Hazlitt, to a den near Edinburgh, like De Quincey, to a Craigen-

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\* Carlyle to Aird, after the publication of Gilfillan's sketch.

puttock or Chelsea, like Carlyle, and there put himself, body and mind, to one task. Hazlitt first gathered out of the world all the help it could give him, and then shut himself away from it to produce. Carlyle and his wife, with sublime courage, dared all for freedom of thought, for means of knowledge and careful production. Carlyle had full leave from his own sense of power, and from a woman's faith in him, to think and write according to his intuitions. He reaped the grain and also the straw of his own resolution, and the gallantry of his companion. Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle were unencumbered by the religious and ecclesiastical element ; Gilfillan lived half his life in it as a circumstance, and all his life in it as a control. For him, no Craigenputtock, no Chelsea. Embarked on another profession than literature, and deeply pledged to it in his own conscience, he turned, as a writer, to the material that lay stored, and could be thrown into vivid form in short time. Moreover, his opportunity came at first with a country newspaper, and brought certain disadvantages. Gilfillan's instinct led him to address chiefly the inquiring young mind of Scotland, and there, indeed, his strength lay. At the same time, newspaper publication is less severe than some others ; even Aird's fine taste had to remember what ensures popular effect ; and there is no denying that the literary portraits which began to appear in 1840, the first, De Quincey, in February, Carlyle, in October, Irving, in December, and went on rapidly for four years, were not in the classic style. That being allowed, their extraordinary force and boldness arrest attention, and as soon as one considers the spirit in which they were done, and the *milieu* into which they were cast, they are seen to be *sui*

*generis*. To men of the reading, reflecting, and religious order, they came as a revelation: the bush burned and was not consumed. Imagination had been a splendid sin—one does not need to be very old to remember the evangelical circles in which it continued to wear the brand forced upon its brow. True, these circles were not all, but they were large and insistent, especially in England, where Byron and Shelley acted the part of Ptolemy in their own holy place. It was impossible for the logic of the English mind to see that this imagination was justified of her children, when the children themselves profaned her temple. Nor was the matter helped when Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt stepped in as interpreters.

Scotland, to be sure, held to her Burns despite his errors; piety in Scotland was always bred within sight of the hills. Yet there was plenty of room for one who knew how to justify Burns, and with him Shelley, Byron, and others, and prove the debt of general mankind to these few glorious wandering stars.

Gilfillan scarcely knew what he was doing. He loved the imaginative intellect as co-witness with conscience for God; ever since he could remember he had loved it, and thrilled with heavenly rapture as he felt its motion within his own breast. He had seen it in Wilson, in Chalmers; now, like a hound let loose, he threw himself upon the track of it in Irving, Coleridge, Shelley, Carlyle, peasant-poets, women-poets, preachers and orators, old friends and new unknown stars, radiating from a distance. The search was itself a poem of humane love and criticism, of literary passion at a white heat.

Take from the portrait of Hazlitt this, which will

show the spirit and compass of Gilfillan's enterprise as he launched forth: "Hazlitt's forte lay in fastening by sure, swift, instinct upon the differential quality of the author, book, or picture which was the topic of his criticism. And in saying this, we intimate our belief that he does not belong to the highest order of minds in whom imagination, or, more properly, creative intellect, is ever the presiding power . . . What are the very highest minds (not Hebrew) by universal admission, which have yet appeared among men? Are they not those of Homer, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser; perhaps we should add, Sir Walter Scott, Goethe, Newton, and Lord Bacon? Now, with the exception of the two last mentioned can any one doubt that imagination, though far from being the sole, was the presiding power in all those majestic minds? Was it not this faculty which animated the old bard who on the Chian strand:—

"Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee  
Rise to the swelling of the tuneful sea?"

Was it not imagination which prompted the golden fantasies and eloquence of Plato? Was it not the same power, in a darker and more demoniac shape, which took down the mighty Florentine through the descending circles of damnation and up the bright steps of celestial blessedness? Did not imagination bind in like a glorious girdle the varied and numberless faculties of Shakespeare? Did it not show to Milton's inward eye the secrets of eternity? Did it not pour all 'The Arabian heaven,' upon the days and nights of Spenser? Did it not people the blank of the past with crowding forms and faces to the exhaustless mind and on the many-coloured page of



Scott? Did not its magic robe bear Goethe harmless as he entered with Faust and Mephistopheles amid the hurry and horror of the Walpurgis night? Nay, even in reference to Newton and Bacon, we can hardly persuade ourselves, that in both their minds it was not the ruling, as we know that in the latter it was a principal, faculty; that it did not attend the one in the giant leaps of his geometry, nor assist the other in making out his map of all the provinces of science and all the capabilities of mind. In somewhat lower, but still lofty regions we find the same faculty presiding over the rest—as in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Burke. In those writers who had the benefit of inspiration it is the same. Think of Isaiah with his glowing eloquence! Ezekiel with his stupendous visions, tinged by the ‘terrible crystal;’ the author of Job with his gorgeous imagery; Daniel with his allegory; David with his lyric enthusiasm; and the author of the Apocalypse, where the events of time and the cycles of eternity are blended in one tremendous tragedy, and enacted on one obscure and visionary stage.

“Imagination thus seems, in its higher form, to be the sovereign faculty of the loftiest natures . . . Perhaps Foster, in under-rating imagination, is only committing the common error of confounding it with fancy—confounding a faculty which supplies foliage with that finer power which produces fruit. But imagination is at once illustrative and creative. It sees by intuition, it illustrates by metaphor, it thinks in music. Great thought links itself instantaneously to imagery, and comes forth like Minerva in a panoply of glittering armour.”

Since that was written fifty years have passed—

half of one of the most changeful centuries in history ; and the writer was notable among those who helped to make change. Take his estimate of Shelley, printed first in Aird's paper in July, 1841, when Gilfillan was struggling for his position as a minister in Dundee, and Moxon the publisher was being prosecuted for his dealings with the poet. The temper of the religious world at that time may be judged from the fact that Aird felt himself obliged to suppress some of Gilfillan's references and to have the paper signed with a *nom de plume*. He chose Apollodorus, and to some extent Mr. Gilfillan became known by that designation. Aird also wrote an introduction, to make the daring essay all the less offensive. Startling it must certainly have been to ordinary readers at that time, whether or not it appeared afterwards as in the book.

"Percy Bysshe Shelley, of all the modern poets, with the exception of Coleridge in his youth, reminds us most—in his earnestness, his *possession*, his manner of communication—of Israel's prophets. His was a burdened soul ; he was the mere organ of a power which dwelt in him ; like one of Ezekiel's wheels his being moved in the might of an invisible spirit. . . . We deplore the atheism of such a spirit and wonder at it with a great admiration, that a being of such richly endowed intellect and warm quick beating heart—who was no profligate, no worldling, tinged with no selfish or sinister motives, but a sincere, shy, and lofty enthusiast—standing up in a creation so full of testimonies to the existence of a Great Spirit ; where there is not a flower that blossoms in the garden but preaches that there is a God, not a leaf that twinkles in the sunbeam, nor a cloud that passes over the moon,

nor an insect which flutters in the breath of the gale or creates a tiny tempest on the waves of the pool, but repeats and re-echoes the testimony that there is a God ; where snow in its silence and storm in its turmoil, summer in its beauty and winter in its wrath, the blossoms of spring and the golden glories of autumn, alike testify to a God . . . that such a being, placed in the centre of so sublime a circle of witnesses, should say 'I doubt, I deny, I cannot believe that there is a God ;' that he should have realised in his imaginary experience the tremendous dream of Jean Paul . . . is in truth an awful, an inscrutable mystery. What ailed this noble misled spirit against the God who had so bountifully enriched him ? What ailed him against the holy child Jesus, with His perfect character and His bleeding love ? He said 'Love is God,' why did he not change it into 'God is Love' ? He deified a vague beautiful principle of benevolence. Why did he not turn and see it in a purer, loftier form, condensed in the countenance, illustrated in the character, and sealed by the blood of Jesus ?

"Shelley was a denier, a dogmatiser ; but he was no whiner, lying across the wheel-way or reclining on the shore. Shelley was a workman, though his undertaking was a desperate one. He shot an infant finger amid the thunder-crashing spokes of the grim wheel of necessity ; it was crushed, and if he did utter one wild wailing cry as he drew it back, mangled into his bosom, who shall blame him ? Shelley was a workman ; though such a workman as in Shinar of old sought to reach heaven by piling brick on brick and mortar on mortar ; working, too, alone, under a black sky, with lightning blinding his eyes."

That is merely a taste of the article, much abbrevi-

ated and failing therefore to give an adequate idea of the glowing abundance of the style, which seems to exult in rolling from clause to clause, from one tributary sentence to another, the gathering flow continuing perfectly distinct in its direction. One sentence is precisely a whole close printed octavo page in length. Part of it is given above ; it gathers itself together in folds like the clouds in a warm April sky. The Shelley oration is undoubtedly the morning flame of Gilfillan's writing day, but it went on to a strong noon. The Byron paper has one of his finest things, the comparison of the poet to his own "Dark Lochnagar," a prose poem of singular power and aptness. "Not the loftiest of his country's poets, he is the most sharply and terribly defined. In magnitude and round completeness he yields to many ; in jagged, abrupt, and passionate projection of himself over the world of literature, to none. The genius of convulsion, a dire attraction, dwells around him, and volcanic as he is, the coldness of wintry selfishness too often collects in the hollows of his verse. He loves, too, the cloud and the thick darkness, and comes 'veiling all the lightnings of his song in sorrow.' . . . No poet, since Homer and Ida, has thus everlastingly shot his genius into the heart of one great mountain, identifying with it himself and his song. Not Horace with Soracte — not Wordsworth with Helvellyn — not Coleridge with Mount Blanc—not even Scott with the Eildons—all these are still common property, but Lochnagar is Byron's property ; no poet will ever venture to sing it again."

The whole passage when first read stamps itself on the mind, and it is Gilfillan's very own ; it contains his essential and peculiar genius for large critical



rhetoric, for memorable picturesque identification and comparison, for association of nature and religion and the flights of the human spirit in one view, as from a mountain one sees cities, and lakes, and forests, and, passing over them, the quick flight of birds.

Yet, in the "Second Gallery" Byron is followed by Crabbe, and nothing is more notable in the whole matter than the ease of the transition and the exceeding sympathy of the writer for this very different poet.

"To be the poet of the waste places of Creation, to adopt the orphans of the mighty mother, to wed her dowerless daughters, to find out the beauty which has been spilt in tiny drops in the most unlovely regions, to echo the low music which arises from even her stillest and most sterile spots, this was the mission of Crabbe as a descriptive poet. He preferred the Leahs to the Rachels of nature; and this not merely that his lot had cast him amid such scenes, and that early associations had taught him a profound interest in them, but apparently from native taste. He actually loved that beauty which stands shivering on the brink of barrenness, loved it for its timidity and its loneliness. Nay, he seemed to love barrenness itself; brooding over the dull page till there arose from it a strange lustre. . . . Crabbe differs from other modern masters, alike in his selection of subjects and in his mode of treating the subjects he selects. Byron moves over nature with a fastidious and aristocratic step, touching only upon objects already interesting or ennobled. This, at least, is true of his "Childe Harold" and earlier pieces. In later productions he goes to the opposite extreme; alights with a daring yet dainty foot upon all shunned and

forbidden things, and rushes in where modesty and reserve have alike forbidden entrance. . . . Shelley and Coleridge attach themselves almost exclusively to the great, understanding this term in a wide sense as including much that is grotesque and much that is homely, which the magic of their genius sublimates to a proper pitch of keeping with the rest. Wordsworth, again, seems always standing above the objects he describes, the bending furze bush and the lowly broom, the nest lying in the level clover-field, the tarn sinking away seemingly before his eye, the prospect from the mountain summit cast far beneath him ; at highest, the star burning low upon the mountain ridge like an 'untended watch-fire.' Crabbe, on the other hand, goes down on his knees that he may the more accurately describe the marsh given over to desolation from immemorial time, the slush left by the sea and revealing the dead body of the suicide, the bare crag and the stunted tree diversifying the scenery of the saline wilderness, the house on the heath, creaking in the storm and telling strange stories of misery and crime, the pine in a wintry wood which had acted as the gallows of some miserable man, the gorse surrounding with yellow light the encampment of the gypsies, the snow putting out the fire of the pauper or lying unmelted on his pillow of death, the web of the spider blinding the cottager's window, the wheel turned by the meagre hand of contented or cursing penury, the stocking that forms a cap by night and *the garter by midnight*, the dung-hill becoming the accidental grave of the drunkard, the poorhouse of forty years ago with its appalling blasphemies, its ferocity without fun, its huddled murders and its shrieks of disease dumb in the

uproar around ; the Bedlam of forty years ago, with its straw on end under the restlessness of the insane, its keepers cold and stern as the snow covered cliffs above the wintry cataract, its songs dying away in despairing gurgles down the miserable throat ; such familiar faces of want, guilt, and woe, of nakedness, sterility, and shame, does Crabbe delight in showing us. . . . It is the peculiarity and the daring of this poet that he often tries us with truth and nothing but truth, as if to bring the question to an issue whether, in nature, absolute truth [fact?] be not essential though severe poetry. On this question, certainly, issue was never so fully joined before. In Wordsworth's eye there is a misty glimmer of imagination, through which all objects, low and high, are seen. Even his 'five blue eggs' *gleam* upon him with a light which comes not from themselves, which comes, it may be, from the Great Bear, or Arcturus and his sons. And when he strives to see out of this medium he loses his vision and describes little better than would his own 'Old Cumberland Beggar.' Shakespeare in his witches' caldron, and Burns in 'haly table,' are shockingly circumstantial, but the element of imagination creeps in, and the light that never was on sea or land disdains not to rest on 'eye of newt,' 'toe of frog,' baboon's blood, the garter that strangled the babe, and all the rest of the ingredients. Crabbe, on the other hand, would have described the five blue eggs, and, besides, the materials of the nest and the kind of hedge in which it was built, like a bird-nesting schoolboy ; but he would never have given the gleam. He could have made an inventory of the ingredients of the hell-broth, or the curiosities on the holy table,

but could not have conceived them, nor have slipped in that one flashing word, that single cross-ray of imagination which is required to elevate and startle them into ideal life. And before his pictures we are compelled to say, 'Well, that is poetry after all, for it is truth; but it is poetry of comparatively a low order—it is the last gasp of the poetic spirit; and, moreover, perfect and matchless as it is of its kind, it is not worthy of the powers of its author, who can rise, and has, at other times, risen to much loftier ground.'

"Had Crabbe been a Scottish clergyman we should have said that he had versified his session-book."

The whole paper is admirable; it is Gilfillan at his best—yet the subject would not, *per se*, appear the most likely to awaken his powers.

The first "Gallery," published in 1845, at once placed its author among men of genius, and, with all deductions for the "anecdotal" and the "tall," established him as a new force in critical literature. With this book he entered, as one says, "the great golden period of his life, during which he was, perhaps, the most popular of all writers with young men; and, certainly, divided the honours with Carlyle."

The volume was brought out by William Tait, of Edinburgh, and Aird generously did his best for it, although he knew that his friend was passing to some extent from the pages of the *Herald*. In March, 1845, James Hogg began to issue his *Instructor*, a rival, and a very worthy rival, to *Chambers's Journal* for many years. Gilfillan was one of the chief contributors from the first, and the payments from that source were welcome to him. Aird writes in the month of June:—"Hogg has sent me the four



monthly parts of the *Instructor*. It is really good, and I shall say a good word for it. I recognise your pieces; they are slighter than your wont." Part of the next sentence has been cut away by an autograph-hunter, but apparently Aird advised Gilfillan to give Hogg of his best, and if, afterwards, there was time, the *Herald* would be thankful to get what it might. "Give me one more good article, if you can, signed with the old stamp of G. G. I do not pretend to disclaim its being very acceptable to myself; and it might help your book by agreeably reminding your friends in this quarter of what stuff the book consists."

There had been some intromissions with Blackwood, also furthered by Aird, so far as he was able. Blackwood, however—and he knew it—did not in the least wish a radical hand like Gilfillan's, and the correspondence soon came to an end—finally. *Hogg's Instructor*, on the other hand, plumed itself on having him among its enlisted contributors, and *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, the first to open its pages to him, continued to have some of his best work, such as the papers on Byron and Crabbe, with those on Foster's Life, and Leigh Hunt, and Emerson, all for the Second Gallery, which was published in 1849. Tait being the first publisher of the Literary Portraits, they were naturally sent there. The articles for *Hogg* were at first of a more general kind, as the bibliography will show; but the sketch of Sir D. K. Sandford appeared there, with others; and, afterwards, the "Literary Divines." Some of these have been already referred to. Gilfillan was here writing a chapter or two in the religious history of Scotland.

Of all this periodicalising there is nothing more

remarkable in its way than the scattered series of papers called, "Bundles of Books," done chiefly for *Hogg's Instructor*, from 1847 onwards. They were short reviews of books and pamphlets sent to Gilfillan for his notice, and as one comes upon them in the pages of the magazine they never fail to give a keen sense of intellectual power and verve. An article on "Books," in April, 1847, may be taken as a preface of these. It is full of the fine optimism that ever sprang up in Gilfillan after and conquering his storms as it conquered his readers. "The mind of man," he proclaims, "is loosing its bands and is irresistibly advancing. In every country and clime there is an awakening from intellectual slumber, a resurrection of the soul." And how is this, he cries, after an impassioned and somewhat too sanguine review of the nations, how but through the diffusion of knowledge, chosen instrument of God's providence? Therefore—"a book is a great spiritual power; it is a rod of magic, a sceptre of command, a fork of the lightning to smite, a ray of the sun to illuminate; now a live coal from the altar, and now a spark from the pit. What, in one sense, says it?—*Nothing*. It seems quite dumb; no sound issues from its largest page—even in the wide Bodleian or vast Vatican not a whisper can be heard. What says it in another sense? What says it not? . . . Take up the shell sitting silent on the mantelpiece and apply it to the ear; it begins immediately to speak as 'pleased it remembers its august abodes, and murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.' Take up the book and it will tell you news from remoter shores than those of the Pacific, from mightier and older oceans than those of the Atlantic. How looks it in one sense? Dim perhaps with age,

dusky with usage, covered with dust, or stained with the trace of tears—there seems little beauty about it. How looks it in another? If a book of genius there is a glory about its every page; it shines, it speaks, it stirs; there is a venerableness in its stains, a glory in its tear traces; the duskiest binding is radiant, and time, which deforms so much else, only adds to the beauty and deepens the interest of a book. Is a man absolutely alone? Still, if he have his books with him, books suggesting high and holy thoughts, he may venture even to take up the language of the great Teacher Himself, and say, ‘I am not alone, for the Father is with me.’”

And a following paragraph must be given, for it describes what books were to Gilfillan, and what his were to uncounted hundreds of readers—what they may be yet, for their spirit is essentially modern.

“In approaching great and good books you, in fact, draw near to electrical batteries, whence, at any moment, shocks may be derived that shall vibrate through the soul for ever. In the excitement created by books lies a higher power than in the mere instruction they give. The one—the knowledge—is dead and cold; the excitement is warm and living. Instructed by books you may shut up your knowledge in yourself as a dungeon; excited by books you pour it abroad from you in flowing streams.”

The “Bundles of Books” gave Gilfillan just the opportunity he liked and could use. In one (March, 1850, *Hogg*), noticing Edward Miall’s “British Churches,” he speaks of Miall, Carlyle, and M’Cheyne as the three men who seemed to him the most terribly sincere he had known and alive with the same kind of heat.

“Although M'Cheyne spent his last sermon in denouncing one of ours, and although his views of the character of the Most High, expressed in that same sermon, were little else than libellous, yet we are free to confess him one of the sincerest and best, albeit narrowest of men. As Mirabeau said of Robespierre, ‘That man will go far; he believes every word he says.’ M'Cheyne believes every word he says. Thomas Carlyle's purpose is to inculcate a new and wide Protestantism, and every fresh book of his comes down with the noise and force of a protesting shilling.\* Miall's object is to make our existing Protestantism once more a living thing. In the personnel of the three men there is a certain resemblance—a grave if not gloomy cast of countenance, a firmness of determination, betraying the flame of zeal burning within. In M'Cheyne's case the fuel of the fire is sentimental fancy; in Miall's, intellect; in Carlyle's, genius; and in all, moral purpose is the mastering power. Miall has much the air of an old common-wealth man.”

In November, 1850, among a lot of small fry, all carefully attended to, comes a notice of William Allingham's “Poets and Flowers,” very kind and prophetic of good. In April, 1851, Gilfillan takes occasion to read a fellow-minister, Dr. John Macfarlane of Clapham, a right slashing lecture on some bigoted nonsense of his about novels and novel reading. “Since the novel is the form into which so much of the highest genius of the country is poured, would he instruct his intelligent readers to stultify themselves by remaining ignorant of an important

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\* Shilling tabled by one who protests and appeals in a Scottish Clerical Court.



part of their country's literature? Dr. Macfarlane's indiscriminate assault on novels is a disgrace alike to letters and to Christianity, unworthy both of his own very respectable literary talents and of the church of which he is a popular minister."

That is straight from the shoulder, and not the least bit insolent or unfair. If anyone wants to see the difference between criticism and assault he may compare Gilfillan's work—any of it, even the most hurried—with certain articles in *Blackwood* (presumably Aytoun's), in 1854, when Professor Wilson's control had just ceased and other counsels than his prevailed.

From the most dashing of the "Bundles," the faults of which are mere specks on their vigour, and which must have been written as fast as pen would go, for Gilfillan was at that time (July, 1852) pushing hard to finish the "Covenanters," one passage must be extracted, for what it is in itself and for illustration of the way the writer spent himself and his own personal experience at every turn. He was never reserving himself, Gilfillan; the fault of repetition that has been alleged against him is simply the defect of that free, frank extemporising, that outpouring of himself which made him the popular man of letters, and planted him deep in the affection of all who prefer the natural and vivid to the finished and regulated.

*Scene.*—A study in a manse; pamphlets, letters, books and MSS. crowding a table. Writer, *solus*, sitting at an old desk. He takes up one letter after another, some anonymous, many more or less abusive, and monologises on them; a servant comes in with a fresh parcel, and then three friends enter. Conversa-

tion, very lively, ensues, some of the jesting is a bit rough; hits are exchanged freely: it is pretty much a rendering of an actual sederunt in the library of Paradise manse.

"G. I have brought back Delta's 'Remains.'

"N. They are admirable. Aird is the best memoir writer I have read for years. He neither says too much nor too little about his hero. And what genuine because not stilted taste! What gleams of poetic description, and what a healthy, natural, breezy tone in the whole book! Thomas Aird is the May among mankind.

"W. That's wonderfully laudatory for *you*.

"N. Delta was a minor Campbell. His stanzas on Burns are worthy of the bard of 'Hope,' and so are his lines on 'A Deserted Churchyard.'

"W. You are a pretty fellow to praise Campbell, after cutting him up in a magazine—a defunct one by the way. You speak of 'A Deserted Churchyard.' I could fill a 'Gallery' with those I know. Four will I mention, dearer than the rest. First, one placed near the banks of the river Ruchil, in my native parish, just where the rough and rapid stream cleaves the woody hollow of Dalrannoch. Often have I mused in that churchyard, and bathed in the clear determined stream running between cold polished rocks, which at one point nearly close above it. The second is the churchyard of Strowan, laved by the Earn, which here is one of the most pellucid of streams. Surely that bridge is one of enchantment! I have leant over it for hours, looking at nothing but the clear pebbles, hearing nothing but the soft lapse of the river, which seemed lingering and speaking to itself. The third is set on a bare, heathy eminence

in Kincardineshire, commanding, toward the west, a prospect of the glorious gorge of the Burn, which seems at a distance a thin strip of woodland, but, neared, includes six miles of varied magnificence of rock, cornfield, purple waters, lawn, tower, grotto, and rich embowering wood. My fourth and favourite churchyard is that on the east end of Loch Lee. It, in Shelley's language, 'might make one in love with death.' There lies one of our poets, Ross, author of 'The Fortunate Shepherdess'—fortunate shepherd, he, in finding such a resting-place. Trees cast their calm and musical shadows over the graves; an old castle is near, 'silent in its age;' the dark lake, with the bare mountains sinking sheer down upon its waters, lies toward the west; only two human habitations are in sight; all combine to give the scene the loveliness and grandeur of desolation. How well I remember, five years ago, while twilight was deepening into night, plunging into the cold, black wave, and receiving a shock that seemed to come from the very foundations of the earth; and how fresh and strong I felt when I came out alone, below a misty night sky, with the lake beginning to murmur in storm at my feet, the stern mountains around, and the little, lonely kirkyard behind me."

Turning from *Hogg* and *Tait*; out of many short publications a little green pamphlet may have special notice. It is the sermon preached by Mr. Gilfillan in the evening of Sabbath, the 26th January, 1851, to the Aberdeen Students' Missionary Union. He gave it in the Free West Church. Among his audience no fewer than four hundred university students; the subject, "The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ." "It may be considered," says the author, "a rude sketch of a

series of discourses ;" it is certainly in his own marked style, and not bombastic, not over-strained. Of the bright ranks of Scotland's youth that night gathered in the northern city by the sea, how diverse and thrilling were the story if all could be rehearsed ! Some at least there were of fine and delicate genius, and many of robust talent, afterwards scattered over the wide earth to every kind of service. A finer audience no man might stand before, and Gilfillan could command it.

We come now to "The Bards of the Bible," issued late in the year 1850. The germ of it existed as far back as 1840, when Gilfillan's brain boiled with schemes. In December, Aird wrote: "If you find you have ample matter for an extension of your papers on Biblical poetry keep it, and extend the thing for after-publication. In the meantime, however, to secure the suitableness of your papers for *Blackwood*, I am certain I have given you sound advice in recommending limitation. I cannot suppose it possible that the Blackwoods will not hail you as an infusion of fresh blood."

They did, however—the blood would have been too strong, perhaps, for the system—and later on Aird (who had the use of the papers meanwhile) suggested including them in a sort of Miscellany of articles with the personal sketches and some descriptive papers, *Reise-bilder* on Peebles, Comrie, &c. This was not the happiest of notions, and Gilfillan struck out a much better plan for himself in making a book of portraits and keeping his *nidus* of Bible exposition by him. It glimmers through the correspondence of the friends thenceforth as one of—how many?—seeds that grew more or less rapidly to plants under Gilfillan's culture. It was not forced



growth, but rather a tropical heat and fulness blazing into production. At the same time, some books were long in hand.

Incidentally, here, it may be noted that in the Aird-Gilfillan correspondence, while the delicate wit and shrewd practical sense of Aird continually prompt the soundest advice and the most wise and genial criticism, it remains evident that Gilfillan had the advantage in a certain large judgment. Aird prunes away "redundancies" and lops off "flourishes," and courteously improves his friend's style for his good; cautions him, too, as he much needed, against haste in publishing; yet Aird altogether mistook the Non-intrusion Controversy. "Our non-intrusion friends have got their answer," he writes, in January, 1843. "'To budge or not to budge, that is the question.' For the honour of human nature I hope they are sincere in their resolution, but—

*'He fitted the halter, he traversed the cart,  
And often took leave, yet seemed loath to depart.'*

They are not out yet! Good, sympathetic people who had floods of tears ready to shed on the occasion may bottle them up, not forgetting to cork them well, for they must stand long before they be needed."

That, by-the-way, as a bit of history and an illustration of the free independence of the life-long friendship between these two. If they never differed, it was not because they always agreed. The Disruption came a few weeks after the above lines were written.

One opens "The Bards of the Bible" to be surprised as one rarely is with a book on the Scriptures. These holy and wonderful writings put to ordeal the man who would comment upon them. They enfold a secret, the discovery of which is man's highest

labour and noblest joy ; yet they scarcely permit intrusion, and must be approached with careful entreaty and humble courage. They give largely or not at all—largely to the simple inquirer, not at all to some of the most learned ; and while commentaries may be the best of reading, they are sometimes nearly the worst, overlaying the mind of the reader as a too anxious parent smothers a child in clothes. Of all literary ventures, a wooden exposition of some part of the Bible is, perhaps, the most vicious, being a sin against the nature of the Scriptures and their mission to the human soul. Now, “The Bards of the Bible” is emphatically a living book. From the first declaration—“The language of the imagination is the native language of man” to the last plea—“Listen to the voice of Christ, which He sends before Him along His dread and glorious way”—the pages seem to utter themselves in living tones. The first impression is of extraordinary richness and profusion. Less earnest, less vital than it is, the writing would be fustian—“a bright sore,” to use one of Gilfillan’s own striking phrases. But it is too intense, too spontaneous for that. It glows and flows like a river of Ind. The most captious reader, if he be at all just, feels the strong wealthy movement. No one can say of Gilfillan, as he once said of another, “His language is picturesque and powerful, but comes from far, and comes as a captive.” That is not how his own comes. No Roman triumph swells his pages. Rather might one think, in reading them, of a national celebration, to which all parts of a wide and wealthy empire have sent tribute and pageant ; a medley, no doubt, yet a medley of striking significance and wonderful *richesse*. A little

barbarous here and there, certainly ; but no small dukedom or petty island could send forth such a stream of figure and group, circumstance and illustration. Here is life, and here is wealth.

Carlyle could have done it better ; and yet, again, as we all know by this time, Carlyle could not have done it at all. He passed by the whole region to which this book belongs and confined himself to a secondary world. We have later writers of much distinction, who, with grace and good intent, have something also of the more pungent, all-needful quality. But, perhaps, Gilfillan's work comes nearer than any other to the utterance of one of the old Hebrews on whom he makes his oration. He comes to us very much like an Ezekiel, full of images, of warnings, of complaint and of strenuous hope. "The language of imagination," he says, "*to which man is accustomed.*" This takes the cool realist quite unaware. The bold, fervid certainty of it warns away criticism and invites intimacy. It will be impossible to quarrel with a writer who thus mounts at once to the table-land of man's freedom, man's possibility, and proclaims it the universal home.

It is a broad, sweeping movement, yet it strikes one as the old orthodoxy writ large, after all—writ very large, not translated into another tongue. "The Bible," he says, "has only one declaration to make, but utters it in the voice of creation." This seems a thing clean inspired ; as you read on you see that the writer only knew the half of his own oracle. He builded better than he knew. His work is not an examination of points, not an improving of the occasion, not, certainly, a philosophic inquiry ; it is a prose poem on the Hebrew poets, as men, as voices, as visionaries.

The maker of the book is a Christian bard chanting of God and man and the cosmos, half in lyric, half in epic strain, with hot eager lips and a voice that sobs and cries. Of our "higher criticism" there is none; there would have been none had the writer lived and written to-day, for though he was certainly a critic, his was Celtic criticism, not Teutonic. It drove at vital facts and left historical detail aside. This was a canon of the interpretation:—"Those modes of presenting religious truth which, amid beautiful scenery and seasons of special spiritual interest, seem harsh, hard, and unsuitable, which jar upon the musical sweetness and incense breathing all around, and the echo of which sounds like a scream of laughter, contradiction, and scorn, are therein proved to be imperfect, if not false. They are not in unison with the spirit of the surrounding universe, but are rejected and flung back by it as foul or rabid falsehoods." There we hear the voice of one who, but for the constraining love of Christ, and the throb in his own breast answering to Christ's personal call, would have been a pantheist. To such a man, the German analytic criticism is a side road; if right at all, in its results, then pretty much a truism; and anyway not the high road of progress. He, too, is a critic, but not after that manner. For examples of this read the passage on the Hebrew language in the first chapter; that on unconscious inspiration in the second; the remarks upon Herder and Ewald; the emphatic judgment upon the authorship of Job, with reasons given. For a passage in which there is no criticism at all, but the strong-beating heart of a man answers back through the centuries to its fellow, and be it David or another, it is life—religion—a vital



thing ; for this, one may turn to a page on the 139th Psalm and be satisfied :—"The poet inverts his gaze from the blaze of suns to the strange atoms composing his own frame. He stands shuddering over the precipice of himself. Above, is the all-encompassing Spirit from whom the morning wings cannot save ; and below, at a deep distance, appears amid the branching forest of his animal structure, so fearfully and wonderfully made, the abyss of his spiritual existence, lying like a dark lake in the midst. Between mystery and mystery, his mind, his wonder, his very reason, seem to rock like a little boat between the sea and the sky. But speedily does he regain his serenity ; when he throws himself with child-like haste and confidence into the arms of that Fatherly Spirit and murmurs in His bosom, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto *me*, O God, how great is the sum of them !' and looking up at last into the Face, cries, 'Search me, O Lord ; I cannot search Thee ; I am overwhelmed by those dreadful depths ; but search me as Thou only canst ; see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting !'"

The book is gloriously imperfect—a studio, full of bold and breathing sketches, some worked-up pieces, some mere heads, bits of scenes and so forth ; all, indubitably, the painter's own work and done with a living hand. Would we had more such galleries of fragments ! They would do much for our young preachers. Nevertheless, the reader cannot but regret that Isaiah is not more fully treated. The greatness of the subject seems to have oppressed Gilfillan's conscience and his wings failed. He wrote a sermon that was to have been embodied in the volume, but it is not there, only a few pages of introduction.

FRIENDSHIPS AND LETTERS.



## LETTERS TO WILLIAM B. ROBERTSON.

**W**ILLIAM B. ROBERTSON (born 26th May, 1820; died 27th June, 1886), known always as Robertson of Irvine, was a bright figure in the Secession Church to which Gilfillan belonged. A small man, with a rather large head and flowing hair; a bard-man, one of those who cannot bend to the lamp, but who can give men visions and leave them wondering how they saw. He had a quite remarkable gift of irradiating the familiar with new lights, and making it flash out in bright sweet surprises. There was thought in the work as well as feeling and fancy, and his few published remains show what he might have done had it ever seemed to him worth while; but he was essentially of the race who spend themselves and leave only an iridescent memory. Between him and Gilfillan the likeness was at points that of brothers. Elsewhere they were opposites, yet never out of the same hemisphere. Gilfillan had more of the will to achieve something, Robertson more of what charms and fascinates. In their earlier manhood they corresponded and frequently met; and they had ever a warm feeling one for the other. Only a few letters remain.

GILFILLAN TO ROBERTSON:—

*16th June, 1843.*—I got your kind note a fortnight



ago. The disappointment was less as, having given up all hopes of you, I had not apprised our Portobello friends, and had made my own preparations. I have got the list of preachers this moment, and find that you have no appointments all July, August, September, and October. Any day in any of those months would of course be most grateful to me, with the exception of the fifth Sabbath of July, which is my Sacrament ; but even that, by the way, would suit me very well, for the Communion being simultaneous, you could serve as an assistant. I am, moreover, probably to be over at Dumfries on the second and perhaps third Sabbaths of August ; but striking off those two days you are welcome to fix on any that may suit yourself, and it will and must suit as well as greatly gratify me. Please let me know as soon as convenient what day you think you can come. *Ceteris paribus*, a first Sabbath day of the month, being that of my evening discourse, would be particularly refreshing ; but don't stickle about this.

I compear before the Presbytery on Tuesday, I believe, to answer for the enormous offence of "Hades." I intend taking a low and gentle ground. It is a little thing, and not worth making a big bother or pother about. It might indeed be prosecuted and defended so as to involve a great question connected with religious liberty, but I feel daily more and more that I am not the person to defend such a great thesis before God, angels, and men.

I am busy at intervals, now rewriting my sketches, and now adding to their number in my private portfolio. It is, I must confess, with no little pleasure that I turn aside now and then from the thorny path of polemical divinity to the quiet walks of literature,

to its fadeless and fragrant roses, to that genuine religious odour which steams up like incense from its glorious evergreens. I have got some Greek plays and poems with which I intend to renew my acquaintance,—the Iliad, Pindar, Sophocles. I am also reading on geology. Campbell is at present undergoing dissection for the 'Gallery,' and Charles Lamb, Emerson, and Elliott are lying beside me in MSS. finished. Do you think I should publish the sketches separately, or interweave them into a book on literature? I tremble at the vastitude of the latter enterprise, at the time it would yet occupy, at the expectation it would excite. At the same time, would separate sketches, unconnected and unconsolidated, have a chance of taking or telling?

And what are your doings or proposings? How like you the preachers' list? Is there not a good deal at first to jar upon a mind of genius and sensibility, in the tossing and tumbling about, the slender interest you feel in the perpetually shifting audience, in the apathy, coldness, and misappreciation of some of your auditors, in the lack of thorough sympathy with almost any of them? You will by-and-by learn like me to be thankful if you can cast the full-length shadow of your mind upon even one or two out of a thousand hearers. Oh, how often have I communed with one beaming face in a large audience, and exulted if it responded to all my emotions and seemed to follow all the steps of my mind, and been enabled, uplifted on its silent sympathy, to bear the consciousness that I had only the glimmering perception, the imperfect appreciation, or worse, the ignorant wonder of the rest. Do not split upon what has been my rock as a preacher, conceiving too highly and expect-

ing too much from your hearers. There is just one way in which a man of genius like you can descend to their level, if it do not rather deserve the name of ascending. Be a child and speak to them as to children. You cannot stop at common-place twaddle, such as the majority of preachers use ; but you can be gloriously childish. So was Jesus Himself, in his sermon on the mount. Yes, it is a positive ascent thus to the cradle. It is a true fulfilment of the words : "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The true sovereign receipt for preaching is precisely that for entering the kingdom that is preached—becoming a little child. Be not displeased with me for giving you this advice :

"And may you better reckon the rede,  
Than ever did the adviser."

Is Irvine henceforth to be your field of labour, or where? We had your brother George a night with us some time ago, and enjoyed him much. When heard you of him, or of James?

I expect Thomas Aird over about the end of this or the beginning of the next month. The Portobello men\* are all well, when they come I know not, as this will depend upon your motions.

23rd May, 1846.—Delighted should I have been to be with you on the 3rd, but I am engaged to James Lindsay of Kilmarnock on the third Sabbath of June, I will, however, *D.V.*, and if you have no objections, run down to Irvine on the Monday or Tuesday after Lindsay's sacrament and see Ayr with you, and the

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\* Samuel Brown and friends.

Spirit of Burns. Have I well said? Write and tell.

Many thanks for your pleasant puffery anent the "Gallery." I have had somewhere about a hundred newspaper and periodical puffs, what from this country and from America, Jamaica, Isle of Man, &c., so I am case-hardened to praise. Still I deeply value *your* approbation, and am even glad that my brethren in the west have found so little to growl at. An edition of two thousand is out in America, and a bookseller writes me he could have given me £100 had there been an international law; instead of which he sends me—what?—a bit of a Baltimore newspaper with a puff on my book. Could commercial impudence go further?

I am glad you have seen Samuel [Brown] and Craig. You would have a glorious time of it. Would I had been with you!

I am engaged in constant correspondence with Landreth of Aberchirder. He is a rare fellow in his way. What a strong vein of sarcasm there's in him, besides his acumen and imagination. He is somewhat cloudy and very peculiar in his style. I have never met him, but he wrote me recently and we are keeping it up. He is hardly reconciled to the position he occupies in such a miserable corner. He writes a good deal in Lewes' Magazine.

7th June, 1847, from Liverpool.—The address at the top of this letter will itself excuse me from accepting your invitation. I trust there's a guid time coming. Mrs. Gilfillan and I are here on our way to London, which we hope to reach by Monday next.



I have still two lectures to give ; and when these are over, I close my lecturing career for ever. . . .

Alison I met in Glasgow, and he was very cordial. I still write in his *Maga*. I am sending away a paper on Byron for next number. I saw De Quincey more than once in Glasgow.

You would be struck by the tidings of Chalmers' death. A great man hath fallen in Israel.

## LETTERS TO DR. SAMUEL BROWN.

SAMUEL MORRISON BROWN (born, 1817; died, 1856) was commemorated by his cousin, John Brown, in the *North British Review*, vol. xxvi., and by George Gilfillan most fully in the *Scottish Review*, 1857. Already we have seen him taken to Gilfillan's heart. His life was in chemical research, and there, staking all on certain bold theorems, he failed—yet as a pioneer. As a religious thinker he struck some daring notes, and his "Lay Sermons on the Theory of Christianity," obtained the praise of Carlyle. His "Tragedy of Galileo Galilei" was his highest literary effort; but he was best known as a dazzling expounder of science. The sorrow of many brilliant and noble men overtook him, and his life closed at forty. Yet the motto that hung in his laboratory shines over his dust—"Perfect through suffering." He was one of those whose friends can never forget that they have lived.

A playful letter to Mrs. Gilfillan, without date, but written obviously before his happy marriage, will show his light, glancing wit and tenderness of touch. Addressing her as "My dear Mother," he says: "You mistake me. These noble lady-forms I praise with so much enthusiasm to George Gilfillan I do not love but admire. It is as 'pieces of celestial art' alone that I bow before them in body and soul. Where

love is concerned, I do not praise. I am silent and steadfast. I do not even admire. I cannot put at sufficient distance to admire. I could no more extol an object of my love than I could myself. I can praise by devotion, by deeds, by constancy, but not by words. As a lover I am the stablest and most unchangeable of men. You accuse me wrongfully. Let my life speak when I am dead.

“As for making a bad husband. Alas! it is too true. I am capricious in my humours, exactive in my demands, all too delicate in my tastes. It were hard to please me always, I fear. I warn all women to avoid me in *that* relation as a pestilence. Yet, Heaven knows, I would be kind, kind. I should love most deeply, cherish most tenderly, sympathise most gently, if one could only bear my moods.

“On the whole, if ever you hear about my being about to ruin the felicity of any fair soul by making her the wife of a wild man, you had best find her address and warn her of her danger. Do—if you have the heart to do it. But, no; I believe, in your heart, you know that I would not be so bad as you declare, and I allow.”

GILFILLAN TO SAMUEL BROWN:—

14th March, 1845.—As Tait declined applying to Mitchell, on the ground that he would probably refuse him, or ask a sum of money for the permission, I wrote again to Carlyle, and heard from him yesterday. He had ascertained that D’Orsey, and not Mitchell, was the proprietor, and had kindly applied to him. In the most cheerful and handsome manner D’Orsey has complied with the request, stipulating only that I put upon my copy of the sketch, “Pub-

lished with Comte D'Orsey's permission," and that I send him a copy of the book. Carlyle encloses D'Orsey's note, which is in French, and which, of course, I will keep as a curiosity. Carlyle wishes me well through the enterprise, and well into another, "as worthy, or worthier, of me." [The reference here is to a portrait of Carlyle for the "Gallery."]

I am still in a great press of little jobs ; have been lecturing to large evening audiences ; speaking at the London Missionary Society's Jubilee here on the wrongs of Tahiti—better than I ever spoke *on a platform* before ; correcting proofs ; away at Dunning Sacrament, &c. I have been refusing, too, on the right hand and the left, but have still several supernumerary engagements ere the winter campaign close—the busiest, by many degrees, I ever had. And, on the whole, I have been tolerably happy, though with occasional lapses into my old liver complaints.

Have you seen *Hogg* ? It is prodigiously popular here and elsewhere, in proportion to its age, selling well ; and I have been gathering golden opinions of my "Poetry and Religion." I am revolving some sketches for it, for which I am promised payment. Mrs. Crowe got five pounds for her first tale in it. My "Painting" and "Music" are forthcoming. Its proprietors and editors are very sanguine of success. Chambers has recently offended the working-classes by one of his issues on labour, and Hogg wishes to pour his forces through the breach. Abundance of room for both.

"Spring is flushing" round us, indeed, in the shape of heavy snow and sharp, talon-like hail, pelting on the windows and down the chimney ; but when it really, and not nominally comes, then, God willing,



Mrs. Gilfillan and I intend paying Glasgow a visit, probably in the merry month of May. Remember how Hazlitt kept up his poor weary heart all winter by the words, "I am to visit Coleridge in spring;" so we are sustaining ourselves by the prospect of seeing, though not properly visiting, the Alchymist in spring.

I am glad you know Nichol, for surely he is worthy even of your knowledge. I am glad that he has fought a fight and gained a partial victory over an enemy whose power and malignity I know well. God speed him still.

See you or hear you aught of Robertson? What is he about? In what angle of ascension stands his star? I have entirely lost sight of, though not ceased to love one so different from my own nature.

Aird has got perfectly comatose, still he is the same dear, kind, noble man, as a letter now and then proves. Hear you ever from him?

Isn't "Suspiria" a grand mythic strain—the more as the provincial press is abusing it? So would an eagle under opium scream and soar, to the wonder and terror of its aboriginal rocks and recesses.

5th May, 1845.—Thanks for your kind little note which set my mind at ease. I had been anxious about your silence. My plans are not yet fixed; but if nothing come in the way we will see Glasgow and the Alchymist in a fortnight. James Vallentine has disarranged our former purpose. I once thought of going over to the Synod where some three hundred meet to-day to square out and measure the bounds of the Divine Death, most probably to "shut the gates of

mercy" on all but a few hundreds of the species, and hand over all the rest unconditionally to the hangman of hell,—but suspect now I won't get. My book is all but out. I corrected its penultimate sheet on Saturday. The lithographers are now the delay. Wilson is to sit for it. Nay, to Tait's great surprise and delight De Quincey has promised to sit. Carlyle and two or three others are to be the rest. A German with a horrid name, Schetke or some such, is the lithographer. By the way Miss Steele, a young paintress of this town, has taken me in chalk, to be lithographed by the same hand. It will soon be for sale at five shillings a copy. It is said to be tolerably like.

I got two pounds this morning from Hogg for a short sketch of Sydney Smith. More are requested. The thing is paying well, thanks chiefly to me and "Susan Hopley." I am glad you allow it at length a little merit. Must I write about nothing except what I understand? Then should all theologians from the beginning of time have made a bon-fire of their quills; for their elementary propositions are the most unintelligible of all—and from nonsense what but nonsense can come? You see I am still a parlous heretic—indeed more at utter sea in my soul than ever.

The "Witch" [lecture on the Witch of Endor] drew as great a squeeze as ever followed Faucit the sorceress—1600 in the church and hundreds going away. Last night was nearly as bad. I mention this more in shame than vanity, for well I know it is curiosity and little else that collects them, to hear "what an out of the way fellow will say."

Aird wrote me lately, as follows :—"Beg Brown to

write me. Why does he not? I refrained because he intimated his engrossing engagements, and I was loath to disturb him. The onus lies with him. I trust he is making way forward. Were those fine faculties of his in regular harness they might draw the chariot of the sun. God forbid he should lose faith in himself." Do write the dear noble fellow.

I heard from Crombie that you were hearing Nichol. He had had splendid audiences and lectures. Could I possibly see or hear him in Glasgow?

11th June, 1845.—Here I am once more in the bowers of Paradise, bowers burning at present under the fieriest heat of the season, and sitting down to indite a few lines to the Alchymist. Let me tell my story since we parted in the Trongate. We drove to Whitevale, found Jeffrey out—*i.e.*, did not find him in—but spent an hour pleasantly enough with his wife, wean, mother-in-law, and sister-in-law. We thence walked to Eadie's, who received us constrainedly but kindly. We found him poring over Hebrew MSS. with a large library beside him. We supped, talked of everything but Hades, among others of you whose visit he is to return soon, and hasted to my uncle's. Next morning dawning a tempest of wind and rain, I went alone to MacGill's, and had some pleasant semi-literary crack till eleven, when I departed for Edinburgh. Nothing particular occurred on the ride. At Edinburgh I saw Crombie, sat two hours with Crawford, who has taken a rough, red, gum-boiled sketch of me, better than the other, and Schenke between the two expects to have me; called on Hogg and had some talk about the rate of payment. It is

likely to be ten shillings a page, and they are henceforth, they say, to pay for every article. I met Crombie again at the "shut of eve" and shop, and with him went and met Mrs. Gilfillan at the train. While there up came my old friend A. Rutherford, and "for auld lang syne" we had a noble shake of the hand. I was at once glad and sorry to see him; and he, I presume, reciprocated both emotions. Thence Margaret, Crombie, and I, hiring a cab drove down to Newhaven, found Schenke in Jeffrey's shop, had him in, supped emphatically, sent Crombie home and went to bed. Next morning we started by the *Britannia* and reached this in four hours' sail, Mrs. Gilfillan sick, I almost alone of all the passengers not. I read Alfred Tennyson all the night, preached the next day, rather well in the afternoon, and have been as dull as ditch-water ever since. This morning I heard from Crombie, and this afternoon from Tait. The latter is sorely displeased with Crawford's De Quincey. He says the little man must sit again. He is furious also at a Jeffrey he has got. He wants me in fine to delay now the publication till October, and wishes me to consult you on the subject. He is ready indeed and willing, if I wish it, to publish by 1st of July. I could tear out my eyes to think of my book being deferred again and again, under sorry pretexts, till now, when all printed and all but all plated, it must be put off four months more. Tell me what you think of this. People here are very impatient for its forthcoming. If, as he has always said, it is likely to be a failure as a paying concern, what much matters it whether it fail in June or in January? Do tell me your honest and candid judgment as to this point of delay soon.



25<sup>th</sup> June, 1845.—I have very reluctantly consented to what you approve of, delay till October. It will tutor me more and more in that stern and rugged resignation which seems the lesson in which circumstances and fate are trying, with some difficulty, to indoctrinate my wild and wayward spirit.

I long for Festus, not for Horne [Ballad Romances?], though he do puff my Landor. I have written to John Brown to try and get it, for your recommendation alone stamps it as first-rate.

I have read or rather am reading "Anastasis" again. I think it effectually and for ever blows up the common doctrine of Resurrection; whether it establishes his own upon Scriptural grounds is a different question. With what Benthamic or Miltonic calmness and confidence does he enunciate his idea as one which will be denied, resisted, abused, but which must ultimately triumph. In fact, if his book do not contain the genuine doctrine of resurrection, the thing will with many sink into a more monstrous transubstantiation, a treble trinity for difficulty and self-contradiction, and become, if anything, a badge not a belief. I think that even as a Scriptural argument Bush's is very plausible, much more so than the common, and the harshest apparent dogmatisms to the contrary yield, soften, and become flexible in his subtle hands. Read him and judge for yourself.

I have been in Stirling and Comrie since I saw you. While in Comrie I spent one very pleasant day in writing for *Hogg* a sketch of my old teacher Sandford, and another more agreeably still in climbing Dunmore, and seeing the unequalled prospect commanded from its summit. It was one of those dappled days in which drops of sunshine are sprinkled

on the shadowy hills. The ferns were very green, very tall, and added inexpressible beauty to the dark and iron-bound mountains. I wished myself a conscious Lot's Wife Stylites, stiffened before the lovely spectacle for ever. I have now returned from a brief bit of romance to the stern monotony of my official duties.

[The rest of the letter shows the mood of the hour to have been that of depression and great irritation with his surroundings. He begs for a brief note whenever his friend has "a spare evening hour and a memory" of him.]

9th July, 1845.—Many thanks for your brief but brave and kindly letter. I am thankful for its encouragement, especially as it is ministered by one who is "himself in the body," and who has felt and feels by bitter experience that it is verily a body of death. Still must we and shall we bear it, whether it be *matter* obstinate and only as yet tickled by your strong and subtle finger, or whether it be *minds* seared and sensualised into a hardness which no eloquence of mine has yet been able to dissolve. You seem in spite of this to feel that your "labour has not been in vain in the Lord;" I, that mine, whether appreciated or not, whether deserving of appreciation or not, has been its own exceeding great reward. Let us, as Shelley, poor fellow, says to Leigh Hunt, "comforting each other in the task, live and die."

Have you read in Balmer's reminiscences of Hall the latter's estimate of Coleridge? It is very poor and pitiful, and springs, in a double descent, from an intense ignorance and deep prejudice against the "mighty

poet and subtle-souled psychologist." The two had met and inter-despised, as might have been interpreted from their intensely opposite constitutions of mind. And now Coleridge is to Hall a mere will-o'-the-wisp, leading over bogs ; and Hall, I warrant me, was to Coleridge a polished pebble of the brook, an elegant mediocrity wrapt up in a leaf of poppy—conclusions both unjust but inevitable. Even their common habit of opium-eating was no bond of connection. Both dictatorial talkers, how could they adjust their strains of conversation to each other? In a like way might Johnson and Goethe have met and recoiled ; only, I fear, Johnson would have first knocked the old Pagan down. [The letter goes on to speak of a minister of his acquaintance, and proceeds :—]

Commend me, rather, by twenty degrees, to honest, bold, generous, coarse, drunken, and inimitable Charley Churchill, of whom I was also reading. I felt while contrasting the two—the one perfectly stainless, pursuing his consistent course, adjusting his periods, nibbling at his confessions of faith, missing small heresies by a hair's-breadth, never daring to look for a moment at the truth, beauty, and terror of the universe, but living and dying a great, grown-up schoolboy ; the other, with the noblest, native tendencies, the honestest purpose, the most generous, genial heart, the most masculine understanding, but cast on a low age, wedded to an unloved profession as to a body of death, hurried into acts of sin which his soul abhorred, warring with reptile antagonists, doing single-handed battle against overbearing political and clerical tyranny, struggling against the direr enemies of his own temperament and heart, alas ! in vain, scattering on

every side of his wild career acts of benevolence, munificence, and justice, as amid his rudest and coarsest verse he was wont to interpose lines of savage grandeur, expressed in Drydenian rhythm—in short, amid an age of false, sneaking peers and soul-galled bishops, intriguing statesmen, and imbecile kings, living and dying an honest man, an Englishman, a gentleman, and a patriot, his friend and sister dying both for grief of his loss, and his grave wet with tears from the holy eye of Cowper—who shall say that the one man stands higher than the other, or that, any more than the other, he was made in vain.



## LETTERS TO SYDNEY DOBELL.

SYDNEY DOBELL, the most cultured of the young poets whom Gilfillan introduced to the world, was the son of a Sussex family, trading people, refined and devout; his father a careful man of business, his mother the daughter of Samuel Thompson, a political reformer and founder of a religious sect, a man well known in London in the earlier part of our century. The home influences were peculiarly religious. Sydney was a singularly precocious boy, and his mind "fidgetted away his body's powers." Married at twenty to one whom he passionately loved, he was known as a poet of rare promise by the time he was twenty-six, was set in favouring circumstances and enjoyed much love and admiration. He was for several years in constant correspondence with Gilfillan, to whom he once wrote:—"If I should ever be called Poet, you will know that my success is in some sort your work." Born in 1824, his mind wore out the body in 1874. His poems were "The Roman," "Balder," "Sonnetts on the War" (written conjointly with Alexander Smith), "England in Time of War." Of his shorter flights, "Keith of Ravelston" is the most finished and impressive.

GILFILLAN TO DOBELL:—

1st May, 1849.—I do not yet return your poem. I

have read it, but I wish to read it again and to make some notes here and there, both of beauties and faults. It is unquestionably a very striking, poetical, and impassioned production. The opening is very fine, and many of the individual passages burn with the fire of genius. Perhaps the monk speaks too much, and here and there in too frenzied a style. The language is sometimes too diffuse, and occasionally verges on the turgid. A worse fault, however, is a frequent obscurity which in the speech of a missionary is not in good keeping or taste. Such blemishes, however, can easily be amended, and leave entire the poem's originality of conception, fervour of spirit, abundance of imagery, and fluency, and force of language. I will note one or two trifling slips which surprise me, and one or two errors in taste.

As to the periodical for which it may be suited, I know not what to say. Its talent, besides the interest at present felt in Italy, ought to admit it into any of the monthlies, but editors are often queer fish. Might you not try *Fraser* or the *Dublin*? If I had any interest with either, which I have not, I should certainly use it for you. Meantime revise carefully. There is enough of the genuine metal to bear a little rubbing-up.

May I ask what and who you, my correspondent, are. Most of my distant unknown friends begin by telling me their whole history, when the "gods made them poetical," and an infinite deal of similar "no-things." You have told me only your name.

I am writing at present a book on the Hebrew Bards, which I hope to have out by December or so. It is a good theme, a theme long neglected and to me particularly dear. You will find a paper in this

month's *British Quarterly* by me on "Thomas Campbell — Modern Poetry." Vaughan has mutilated it considerably, at which I am not a little displeased.

14th August, 1849. — Thanks for your kind and interesting note. I re-inclose you the "Monk's Soliloquy." I like the beginning and the close, the middle not so well. You don't in it bring out your idea so clearly or sharply. The thought running through the whole is very striking, and the picture of the "Great Presence" bending over the neophyte rises to the sublime. I do not somehow think the language or melody quite worthy of the grandeur of the conception. There is some *earth* still around the feet of your rising lion. The spirit, however, and thought are all I could wish. Expunge, I would advise, the first line, which is Shakespeare's. Don't you remember how some of the noblest scenes in the "Cenci" are spoiled by one or two unintentional plagiarisms from Macbeth? I am glad your work is so nearly complete. Don't be over anxious about its success. The fate of a first work is always precarious. As Carlyle wrote me when my "Gallery" appeared: "If they receive it ill, write you the second better, so much better as to shame them." I predict, however, that real judges will receive your beautiful poem well.

Ay! come and come quickly to our glens and moors, and lochs and mountains. They will, if not give you new thoughts, yet wondrously correspond with your old and most exalted ones. Thoughts which you had rejected as Utopian, and feelings you had deemed extravagant you will find fled before you

and nestled in those glorious crags as their native and unalienable home.

I must close. I sent Armitage the engraving. My little notice of you appeared a month ago. Have you not yet seen it?

19th November, 1849.—I think Moxon (albeit I owe him a grudge for declining my "Second Gallery") is the best publisher for *poetry* in London. But would it not be better to try Edinburgh first?

Your "vision" is very powerful, and, like a vision, here and there a little *dense*. It is worthy of the poem, but not the best thing in it. It has some striking lines—

"Gods! the very stars  
Are nearer to us than to-morrow,"

is a golden thought.

All success on your journey. Don't be discouraged by want of success. The "Gallery," of which you speak, was rejected by Blackwood and Black, and but for the risk undertaken by some of my friends would not have been received by Tait. Yet I cleared £100 by it. But this is a base plebeianism.

Kind regards to your *cara sposa*. I, too, have an admirable and devoted wife.

P.S.—Have you a likeness of yourself that you could send me? I have taken a yearning to see you. Only twenty-five! What you may yet do. I am thirty-six. Eheu!

19th December, 1849.—Thanks for your interesting



and graphic letter. I rejoiced in it ; but you are too severe on Croly (that's the proper spelling of it), who, apart from his many and monstrous prejudices and his mere outer man, has a distinct greatness about him ; and for native power, as for acquired knowledge, is worth a dozen Marstons and three Leigh Hunts. But you have not read his "Salathiel." Then, you know him not. He is bringing out a second series of that noble tale. From a note of his to-day I rather think that he *saw* your feelings towards him. I regret having introduced you. You are both young ; when ten years older you will have more charity for those who differ, and less faith in mere external indications of the inner man. How many an idiot bears a magnificent development, while it is denied to the poet of "Paris in 1815" and "Salathiel," as it was to Keats and Shelley. "Man looketh at the outward appearance, God at the heart."

I hope Bentley has *bit*. I have no doubt you are sure of a publisher. Should you fail everywhere else, go to Henry K. Lewis, 15 Gower Street, North, name my name, show him, if necessary, this letter, and I think he will be your *accoucheur*. Let me know soon how you have sped.

8th March, 1850.—I have only time to acknowledge your valuable and most valued packet [a review of the "Galleries"]. I have read it twice with the deepest pleasure. In the language of Carlyle, "I will not thank you for so much praise, but I will, right heartily, for being a brave, true-hearted man, and loving me so well." I will also thank you for the many beautiful and striking thoughts contained in it.

You shall have my full mind and Brown's on it next week.

I send you a paper where your name occurs. You will recognise the "friend" at once. Aird writes the notice. By the way, I have promised that you will send him a copy of "The Roman." Mrs. Gilfillan thanks you warmly for your forthcoming "Snowdrop." She keeps no album, but she will put it in her heart.

Commend me kindly to your *cara sposa*.

23rd May, 1850.—I do not know how to answer your last "pleasing yet dreadful" letter—

"Like a maiden sword  
Startlingly beautiful." (Festus.)

Nor do I mean to answer it at length. I sympathise with much in it. God knows we need a new theory both of sin and of punishment; but till I know fully *yours*, how you accomplish your theory of the relation of the outward visible signs which we reward and punish to the inward spiritual features which our human legislation ignores, I must just wonder, wait, and hope.

I have no doubt the poem you contemplate will be worthy of you. But at the risk of, to after ages, seeming a dirty dub (as we say in Scotland) obstructing the forming of the foundation of what may be an immortal pile, I beg leave to say that, first, I think the title decidedly a mistake. Everybody will shrink from the "Scoundrel." And from your former *nom de guerre* "The Roman"—what a falling off! If you publish, do so under another name. Then, is your theory of sin pondered and complete that you are free to cast it into a dramatic and permanent, if not

immortal form? Have you weighed the dangers of altering the common and conventional notions of sin? I have in the course of my ministry come so much in contact with sin, have seen the fascination of its breath to be so powerful that I tremble—if the ugly name were changed—that it would propagate the ugly thing. Your poem, certainly, would appeal to a higher class; but, alas, I fear in that class each individual has his own notion of sin, a notion founded on *his own* inclinations, and which your definition, however livingly conveyed, would not permanently change.

Dear friend, let sin alone,—I mean the definition of it—but attack society with all the energy of your mind and the affluence of your young genius. *It* is a lie. You and I are at one here, and also at one with a person who, I suspect, laughs at, if not abuses us both—Thomas Carlyle. (I know nothing, mark you, of what he says of either.) We are at one too, I find, in our notion of what is to remedy the evils of society, namely, an advent—I hope of the “same Jesus.” Is yours identical? I ask for information, for my notion of you would remain precisely the same even if I found that you hoped for Bramah or Shelley (provided you thought either of them the Man-God) from heaven. But is it the Jesus of Calvary you expect? Tell me, the more as I am almost alone in this city of 80,000 in pleading month after month that *He* it is who shall come and not tarry.

I doubt not, dear friend, that you are among those who shall be the forerunners of that Second Coming, nay, one of the foremost. But as I love and *fear* all exclusive expressions of design from the noblest minds, as I fear “Bedlam and the grave,” even for the gifted, as I remember Edward Irving and Percy Bysshe

Shelley—let me implore you to pause ere you discover yourself in any other attitude than that you have victoriously won a right to assume, the name and title of our most rising and sincere poet.

Your "Spring" is very beautiful. Write on for a few months at such things, and God will by-and-by give you, not a "load of flowers fresh from heaven," but one consummate broad-faced sun-flower, at which nations and gods may conspire enviously to gaze.

20th June, 1850.—Give Mr. Newton my kind thanks. From a hurried glance at his poem it seems good. I always liked his communications, from their modesty as well as their merit. His fear of being a bore is totally unfounded.

I am very sorry you can't be here this summer; and yet I rejoice, too. I should like you to see the man, of whom you have prophesied so kindly, "as he is." And alas! there is at present a gloom over him, arising partly from his wife's illness and unhappiness, and partly from some sad trailing shadows of his *once stedfast* darkness—a darkness which his critique on "Sartor Resartus" in the first "Gallery" faithfully mirrors. They are, I hope, passing away, as their brethren did before them, but he is not yet out of the route of their retreating march.

I wish you had done your work. At present, to me, everything sounds hollow, like cavernous earth. The words, hell, heaven, truth, God seem ringing below one, and with strange echoes of denial. Oh, that the Saviour were come! I think that, with all my errors and faults, He would accept me, were it for nothing else than that I have never



despaired of the race for which He died, and of Him as alone competent to the rescue of us all.

I am asked to lecture in Leeds in winter. It is not absolutely impossible that then I may dash on to Cheltenham in response to your kind invitation.

*4th July, 1850.*—Thanks for your letter. It (as did your article) at once encouraged and humiliated me. I can, I have struggled against many difficulties, and felt the victory easy. Such things as rejected contributions, coldness, alienated friendships, &c., never moved me for more than a few nights. But the burden of a prophecy, from a friend like you, comes down like the burden upon Atlas, sure either to crush or to create a stir of respondent strength; but I know my weakness. You see my original and still extant nature. I know my environment, to use one of Carlyle's darkly-winged words. I seem to myself to walk, a prophecy of a more energetic G. G., of another temperament and another time. I see men, every day, most pitiable in intellect, and with little heart and little belief, and yet so strongly *one* in their aim and object, that I seem beside them like a shattered rainbow beside a star—or a clod! Mark you, I do not plead guilty to any shade of Coleridgeism. I am the most punctual and regular of men. I do not, like you, lead a life absolutely anchoretical; but my enjoyments are always limited, and subordinated to my many urgent duties. Externalities, indeed, are all in my favour. But I have a restlessness and uncertainty of spirit which are for ever preventing the "master-current of my brain" from flowing

"Permanent and free."

In that width you have ascribed to me, I feel like dames of old with their trains. I am often entangled in it, and sometimes tumble over it. In short, I want to my disparted and disentangled powers and feelings, now touching Christ and now Shelley, the one trumpet-blast of united purpose which, freeing and consolidating me, may in me consolidate and liberate many. When shall that trumpet sound. Perhaps over my dust. Be it so. I shan't then, if *you* live, want one friend who has seen me, loved me, and hoped against hope in my possibilities. Your article and letter are, while humbling me to the dust, helping me in what I am doing at present—*i.e.*, hewing out a statue of Paul for the "Bards." I am, from a hint or two of yours, painting the "Paul of the present." It points out the being, probably yourself, of whom I walk, the *wraith*.

'Tis time something should be done, for there is now no enthusiasm or sincerity in Scotland—I mean little. The clever minds in it are all infidel, of the lowest kind, more or less disguised under an affected Carlylism, for that in Scotland is the cormorant shape of the Devil just now. The few really gifted men in it are walking cloudy, uncertain, and probably unhappy. John Wilson has no theory or belief, and wishes to have none: he is resting on his oars, and awaiting the cataract's information, to which he is fast hastening. Professor Nichol is trying to patch a kind of Mauriceism upon an old coat of Godwin's, sincerely doing so, mark you, and in a noble spirit, for "were you to call a dog Nichol, I should love him." Thomas Aird is reposing, a noble sluggard (in conscious imbecility *on that subject*), under the slumbrous but not rich light of the Scottish Establishment.

Samuel Brown is working out some really mechanical, but professedly spiritual, dream of his own, ignoring, I fear, Christ and His miraculous mission. I, if I dare name myself with such people, am as yet, to a great extent, ignored on that subject, partly because many reject me because I am a clergyman; others abhor me because I am a literary man; and some venture to question my honesty and sincerity. At this last, especially, you will laugh.

Meanwhile the rabble-rout of Carlylists, who have borrowed his bile without his brain, his unbelief without the deep *howling* faith which lies below, are increasing, and among the wretched creatures he has unwittingly spawned, the worst are in Edinburgh. These combine in themselves all the unbeliefs of their sceptical city, Hume's dogmatic doubt, Thomas Brown's faltering and half-hinted quasi belief, Jeffrey's elegant indifference, Wilson's non-belief, and Carlyle's craving cry for belief. . . . But I wax cynical, and am letting poor Paul stand still. Forgive me, and write soon.

29th October, 1850.—I heard last night in Glasgow the best criticism on myself ever given. It was from a plain, decent man, who had been one of my flock, but who is now in Glasgow. He was asked by some one how he liked me. He said, "He is"—(I waive the blunt and sincere compliments)—"but he has not come to his *point* yet." This from a poor mechanic! It seemed to me *vox populi et Dei*.

What that point is, Deus alone knows. But I beg you, as my prospective critic, not to find, nor say you have found it in the "Bards." *That* is criticism still,

although, I think, here and there of a higher order than before. The work of origination is yet, so far as a whole is concerned, future. Ah! no one, not my most malignant detractor, not the *Athenæum* critic, nor his smallest snarling mimic, knows more thoroughly than I do myself that I have yet much, perhaps all, to learn.

You already know much that I am only beginning to see. Your notion of literature was, *ab initio*, the high and only true one. It was from the first a religion with you; with me a frenzied passion, which saved me almost all other passions, and has only of late been subsiding into a quiet and deep feeling. You have always subordinated it to a grander object. I am only learning as yet to do so, and may never be permitted to perfect the instruction.

26th November, 1850.—I write to acknowledge your charming poem ["Crazed"] for, in spite of the sadness of the subject, charming it is—the finest thing you have written since "The Roman." The idea is new and affecting; the mania is followed out with profound subtlety in its quick alternations, its unity and endless and dark diversities and deviations; the interjected descriptions are in admirable keeping, and the explanation at the close is graceful and tender in the extreme. I have asked Aird to give me his notion of the poem, which, when he does, I'll acquaint you with.

14th December, 1850.—To Coxhorne it was absolutely impossible that I could have gone, for my every



night of absence was occupied with public duty, and I was compelled to be home last night. I gave eight lectures and preached once, and, on the whole, was pleased with my reception. But my conviction of the inutility of lecturing grows. Oh that I could afford to retire to some Highland wild, and there muse and dream, and think and write! I hope yet, if God spare me for ten years, to be able to do so.

I met with great kindness and with many interesting men, with clergymen "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ" nor of the beauty of literature, with struggling and sincere laymen seeking their way to Zion, with aspiring youths who had my works almost by heart, and with some devout admirers of "The Roman." Neither you nor it are any worse of my little progress in Yorkshire. But there were several to whom it needed no introduction.

I can solve, I think, your difficulty as to the inequality of the "Bards." Many parts of it were written ten years ago; the "Destiny of the Bible" was written this October, and written at Comrie to the tune of the Grampians. But I plead guilty to inequality. I cannot write equally well at all times, nor ever expect to do so. Spring and autumn inspire me; the heat of summer enervates, and the cold of winter chills and cripples me. . . .

I look for your "Newman." I read part of his "Phases" at Leeds, and thought it feeble. He is a learned, pious, and sincere fribble.

I had a kind note from Bailey anent my notice of his "Angel World." It is as I suspected. It was meant for a bit of "Festus." By the way, what is your idea of that poem—Festus, I mean?

I must close. Mrs. Gilfillan sends kind regards to your lady and to yourself.

30th December, 1850.—Your letter has cheered my “Mondayishness”—you don’t know the full meaning of that clerical term. I am now much better, but not quite myself yet. A certain languor still hangs about me; and yet yesterday I preached three times, and am rather better instead of worse of it.

Thanks, dear friend, for your unwearied kindness in the matter of my book. It is doing well, both as to sale and opinions—with some exceptions which hitherto have rather honoured the book from the dense stupidity or open malice visible in the attacks. All, however, admit the orthodoxy and ability of the book but stumble, some of them, at this or the other stumbling stone.

I am no believer in eternal punishment, nor have been for years. And now I find few who, when you come to close quarters, are. But I do not believe in the universal restoration of Midges, Madmen, Tigers, Serpents, and all the other Dark Disarrangements we have called men. I incline to Destructionism; or rather to the idea of God selecting His own children from among the mass, and leaving the others silently to die away. Have not whole races of animals expired already? And what were they worse than the majority of men? I believe in the word of the Apostle, “Elect unto *everlasting life*.” But I believe also that the number of the elect company shall be “a great multitude which no man can number,” out of every kindred and people and colour and creed, yes even from ultra-Calvinism itself. Am I not now heterodox to your heart’s content?

How glad I am that you will so soon see Brown! He is a man you must hear and see ere you can know him. His hitherto works give no adequate notion of him at all. He is better in health, too, and quite another man from what he was last spring. I envy your mutual pleasures in your lovely retreat. I'll be with you in spirit and in dreams.

Mrs. Gilfillan, who is in her usual, sends kind Christmas and New Year's wishes woven in one for your *cara sposa* and yourself.

17th February, 1851.—I was very happy to see your handwriting once more, although the tidings it conveys are somewhat unpleasing. Alas, these frail bodies of ours! The soul suspended for health, strength, and even action upon the throbbing of an organ, or the digestion of a meal! God send you a good and speedy restoration.

I wrote instantly to Price [*Eclectic*] pleading your apology, and assuring him that no other could do the thing so well. He is a sensible and a kindly man, and is sure to accept our joint excuse.

I am dull to a point of depression, which is now unusual with me. It is partly the reaction of yesterday's excitement, but I have other reasons for it. The *Palladium* is dead! Its next number is its last. So there is an end of an "auld sang." No more "Newman"! No more "Poem-Mysteries"! It has been ill-managed on the whole, has not been widely sold, was involving Wight in pecuniary risks, and is to be stopped in the midst of some five series of papers! This, however, I have got in a secret, and you must keep it till the first day of March, after

which it shall be no secret to its small but select world. Do write me an elegy on it, and relieve your sorrow and mine.

My far deeper grief is this—Thomas Aird, my thrice-noble friend, my sweet and gifted “elder brother,” the man who first encouraged me in my literary way, the high-minded man, the original poet is, I fear, dying. Spasmodic affections of the heart have so enfeebled him that he has repaired to his native village to set his house in order, to arrange especially the affairs of the family of a deceased brother to which he has been a father, and then returns to Dumfries to prepare, I fear, for a farther journey. It is barely possible that he may yet recover. But it is an old complaint, and its attack this time has been peculiarly and alarmingly severe. It has troubled me terribly. And yet why should it do this, since I know that “living or dying he is the Lord’s?” A better man does not breathe.

I have not the heart to-night to enter on a minute criticism of your cousin’s work. It has, as I have told him, many and great beauties, although full of improbabilities and crudenesses which testify to a first work. He is evidently a fine, true, genial, and, even in some measure, gifted person. I notice it soon and briefly along with some others in “Hogg.”

Send a copy to Wilson, by all means; only be aware of this—he is the most irregular of all men; may never notice it in the “Boreales;” may never even acknowledge its receipt by letter. I know that he is friendly to me after a fashion. Yet he has never by letter or public notice acknowledged the receipt of any of my three volumes, all of which I have sent him. I have, apart from my own experience, my own



very decided opinion as to Wilson's truth and morale, but don't care to express it everywhere. So be prepared for disappointment.

*28th February, 1851.*—Aird is considerably better, but far from being out of danger. The least annoyance, he says, "puts his poor heart off the rails." I heard from him to-day. Did I ever tell you that the "First Gallery" appeared almost entirely in his paper, and was indeed prompted by his generous suggestion? So that I am after a manner his literary son. He was a day last week at Portobello with Brown, and they both descended upon Delta who lives some miles off. Aird also saw Wilson, who seems to have been commending the "Bards." He (Wilson) is also in bad health, so that I fear a copy of "The Roman" were wasted on him, except indeed as a gift to a dying Lion. . . .

You have hit the cause, or one of the causes, of my literary imperfections, present or past—that is over-engagement. I have scarcely ever an hour free from the liability of interruption from visitors or members of my church, or the necessity of visiting pastorally, &c.; so that I write, read, think, eat, and drink in snatches and broken fragments of time. My sleep only is entirely free, and of that I must have eight or nine hours. Then I have MSS. to peruse, meetings to attend, and very often three discourses each Sabbath, so that many wonder how I can ever write elaborately or with full purpose of heart at all. Then, I have no good library to consult, and my income will not permit me to buy many important works, so that the strain upon my time, memory, body, the

entire man in short, is incessant and growing. But hitherto I have been "helped wonderfully," as the Methodists say, and may, perhaps, in a few years be able to accomplish a kind of ideal purpose of seclusion and study, the hope of which has cast a rainbow for a season over my scatterry sky. If not, why then, this is my portion under the sun, and my works, such as they are, may sink or swim, fragmentary remains of a life of fragments.

As to poetry, I have not promised in the "Bards" or anywhere else *publicly* a poem as forthcoming. But six or seven years ago a warm friend suggested to me "Night" as the subject of a poem, and it has since been stirring obscurely in my bosom, although I feel that my time to sing of it has not yet come nor may for many years. Tell me sometime or other why you don't wish me to poetise. Dr. Alexander of Edinburgh has, you would notice in last month's *Palladium*, forbidden me fiction; and now comes the cruel "Roman" and forbids me poetry too! "And the voice said: What shall I cry?"

You don't love Dr. Croly; yet you will be grieved to see from the papers that he has lost his wife. I saw her but for half-an-hour, but she seemed an interesting and lady-like person.

My dear Margaret (when one hears of others losing their wives, how much closer does one press his!) unites in kind regards to you both.

19th March, 1851.—Many thanks for your note, its tidings, its inclosure, and all. What a small, scratchy fist, like that of a rebel fairy, does the Italian Demiurge write! But his thanks are most gracefully

conveyed. That first sentence, especially! I was often wondering within myself how Mazzini was pleased with "The Roman;" or rather, whether he had seen it, for as to his opinion there could be no peradventure. And now that the Hand of Italy has come out in your favour, should you not try its Tongue—I mean Gavazzi?

Although I have called Tennyson "an artist, not a prophet," I grant that in the instance you tell me of he is and must be a true prophet. But you are already one of the greatest poets we have; and, mark you, I take more credit to myself for my predictions, since I made them before you were known, and pronounced them concerning a volume of MS. not of popular print. Has *he* not "plentifully declared the thing *as it is*?" However, his verdict is honourable to his generosity and must do you service.

I have not seen the volume of specimens [of English Literature]. I know nothing whatever of the selections. I only wrote the preface, of which I do not think moreover very highly, although it be a true *vidimus* I think. The publisher, I fear, is not the thing. He has neither paid me for the preface nor sent me the book.

Aird is better, I rejoice to say. I saw he quoted your beautiful "Snowdrop" the other day. How truly you call it "The Snowdrop in the Snow," published as it is in the *Athenæum*.

23rd April, 1851.—I cannot write you "beautiful letters" like Samuel Brown. I do not feel the vocation. "Honesty in ink" is my theory of letter-writing; the artistic epistle I have never practised, nor

shall. At the same time I feel called on to answer very shortly your kind letter of the 21st.

No! write "Newmans" and "Romans" for a long time to come, like treatises of Reformation and "Comuses," till the time for the Epos come. Only, don't underrate the "Paradise Lost"! You have satisfactorily proved that it is human, not in a sense Divine. But, sanguine as I am, I never expect (not even from Yendys or Bailey) to find the better parts of that Divine Song surpassed. If you equal them, I shall fall on my knees in sincere thankfulness. But where have we any whole even to be compared to it? Nor ever perhaps again!

5th May, 1851.—Delta the delightful [D. M. Moir] has sent me his "Lectures on the Poetry of the last Fifty Years," delivered to the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. They are very pleasant, if not profound. He is greatly pleased with the "Bards," which he thinks by much my best book.

13th May, 1851.—I somehow don't like the plan of fixing the *volatile hermes* of our correspondence within any weekly limits. Whenever the thought strikes either of us, let him write—and the oftener and the longer the better. But, no compulsion, to freeze the generous cream of our friendly communication. Besides, don't you know I have another and a superstitious reason! I had once a correspondent who wrote me on a paction—once a-week. It became a terrible affair! We quarrelled about the Evangelical Alliance (he being for it, I against) and for a month or so our



correspondence, ere it dropped for ever, was the meeting of two batteries of abuse ; and he (being a cousin of Samuel Brown) was able to give nearly as good as he got. So I have contracted a nervous horror of regular martinet correspondence, and tremble at the dimmest idea that we shall commence it, perhaps to terminate in a similar way. Let us stick to the old "Voluntary system," and long may it thrive.

Young Hogg has just left me, leaving a copy of the second edition of the "Bards" and one hundred pounds or rather guineas. Good! I have, in the second edition, excised the minor blemishes of the book. I mean, hereafter, to add a chapter or two, and so complete the thing. In my next work I shall try to be a bit of a Bard myself—I don't mean a rhymers.

Delta can't have seen your poem, else he would have noticed it. I was writing him yesterday and gave him a broad hint on the subject. But he is a true man and has, I do verily believe, been only guilty of a sin of ignorance, so think well of him till you hear from me again, and by the way have you sent him "The Roman"? Mark you, he is at present the Scottish Autocrat of Poetry, Jeffrey being dead, Wilson retired, and G. G. not yet recognised in Modern Athens. So perhaps a copy may come on him with demonstration and power.

19th May, 1851.—I think you should write to Delta; he is a friend worth gripping close to one. Everybody speaks well of his heart, although there are various opinions as to the question of his original genius. But he is a most accomplished man, and, as

I said before, there is much confidence reposed in Scotland in his taste and judgment.

9th June, 1851.—Why so silent? I was expecting long ago a letter containing the outline of your new work.

I am asked to write for the *Critic*, which has got into new and able hands. My reason for accepting the request is, I don't disguise it, to do all that in me lies to destroy the *Athenæum*, that *Times* of literature, only without its thunder. I have told the editor of the *Critic* to try and engage you into his cohort. It may take a hard fight, but the interests of real literature and of true Christianity demand that I shall take my part in it to break down, if possible, the monopoly of a set of small clever men who are clubbing their little individualities into the appearance of genuine life. I believe there is a secret history in such joint-stock judgment-seats which, were it known, would prevent any man who regarded his own character from entering them.

I have lost all faith in human philosophies or literatures. I love them just as I love the babblings of my wife's dear little nephew, a boy of four, who is at present in my house. But where is the word of "our Elder Brother," of one speaking with authority? Alas! alas! the whole race (misled hitherto by superstition or fanaticism, or false philosophy) should proclaim a fast, call a solemn assembly as wide as the earth, and on quivering knees should repeat the cry—"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly"—otherwise——!

But Thomas Carlyle is issuing a new life of John Sterling, and let you and me wait for its revelations!!!

1st September, 1851.—I am back from a little stroll among the beautiful woods and hills of Kincardineshire, the birthplace of my dear wife, where I have seen lovely rivers, bounding on their way amid richly wooded rocks and divine glens, rainbows as vivid as the sun standing for hours together over the wild wind-swept mountains, heard the moaning of the midnight storm upon miles of woodland, and, what was dearer still, mingled myself, soul and body, with some dear children, nephews and nieces of my wife, whom we both love like their parents, and whose occasional company here or there is the sweetest solace of both our lives. One of them is a boy of five, with a head of seven, and the strangest idiosyncrasy I have ever met in a boy, manly, intrepid, full of life, and yet queer, odd, and what we call *auld-farrant*. Two of them are beautiful affectionate little girls, with a storm of rich ringlets descending each neck, and with archness, kindliness, and *naïveté* looking out at every feature. Oh, it is pleasant to bathe in those fresh waters of immortal life! Surely there is no well in Malvern that can be named in comparison with such sainted springs of God.

I am truly sorry that the "Second Angel" has been compelled to seek healing instead of giving it. May virtue go out of the waters and repair her fine frame!

So you are living beside Carlyle. I knew he was at Malvern. Poor fellow! He has been of late very bilious, and consequently morbid. I have been told that his "Life of Sterling" is not at all polemical, but written in a gentle conciliating spirit. I long to see it, and since you seem resolute in declining the task, I suppose I must review it.

I am extremely glad of your short but satisfactory confession of faith to which my whole soul responds. I have been looking lately into Neander's "Life of Christ." I do not think him very successful in removing the external difficulties; but, amid all the contradictions and confusions of that early history, there dawns more distinctly on me every hour the image of a Divine Man, God's well-beloved and only-begotten Son, not a mere man, but God-in-us; and on Neander's page this image lies, stronger for the shadows which he tries but is unable to remove.

You are right as to the creed of Carlyle and Brown. It is naturalism, disguised, in the one by that prophet-seeming spray of earnest fury which surrounds him from head to foot, and in the other by his fine enthusiasm which looks like Christianity, and by his admirable artistic selection and use of language and divine (???) *double entendres*. But to me and you the cold granite of Natural Religion looks out through all the fiercer or finer mist amid which it is environed.

Poor Smith has written me again, in a very modest style. He is labouring ten hours a-day, and has been so since ten years of age; he is twenty-one. He is anxious to rise to a more suitable sphere, but does not know how. I have written him encouragingly, and intend to notice him in some of the periodicals. He has sent me some more poetry of real merit. I half fancy that while in you I found another Shelley, of a manlier and Christian type, in Smith I am to find another Keats. He is at all events a true poet, although as yet he has only been plucking and weaving stray wild-flowers, and must bend himself to some enterprise of pith and moment. Poor fellow! he kept his poetry beside him for a month,



not sure whether to burn it and "tame himself down to his destiny," or to send it to me.

I hope to hear from you soon with all tidings of Dark Thomas and the promised excerpt from your poem.

P.S.—You may remember me to T. C., although I fear that since the Bards he has less hope in my discipleship than when he wrote thanking me for "John Sterling." He's a great unhappy soul, after all.

13th October, 1851.—I was glad to see your handwriting once more. I was apprehensive that in some unknown way I had offended you, and that you had tried that "inexorable silence" which sometime ago you said would be your only revenge against me were I to displease you.

I ought to have sent you "Macaulay" as a whole-burnt-offering to the shade of Plato. You only saw the third part of it. I am glad to say that some men whose opinions I value, think very highly of it. Nor do I much regard what you say (except that you say it) about *calling names*. It is a practice as early as Adam, who, I suppose, when the ape and the monkey passed by did not remain silent. I hold to my privilege, and shall always do, to call a spade a spade, an ass an ass, and a liar a liar. Unhappily there still remain such beings in God's universe, although it would need much logic to persuade me that they derived themselves and their detestable qualities from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As to *isms*, I am much of your mind. But, reading

Macaulay, I found him so determined to magnify Bacon's utilitarianism, that I was compelled to present in strong relief the other and more excellent way. Nor am I exactly of opinion that Hygeia is to supplant Jehovah or Jesus. I think very lightly indeed of our sanatory religions, or of the cleansed and sparkling bubbles which arise in our mountain cold-water pools of Siloam.

You tell me nothing of Carlyle and your one walk with him.

13th February, 1852.—I have been in London lecturing in Exeter Hall, and on returning yesterday, found your letter as a *bonne bouche* waiting for me. My conscience was smiting me during all my journey, why not take a run to Cheltenham and see your friend there whom you love so dearly?—but I appeased it with the two true facts that my time was limited, that every day of it in London was engaged, and that your dear wife's health was likely to render a visit inconvenient. I therefore did not obey the impulse to rush down unexpectedly upon you and catch you, perhaps, in the very act of committing the crime of poetry. However, there's a good time coming.

I enjoyed London very well. I saw two men of mark and name I had never met before—F. Newman and Mazzini. Newman is, I think, a feeble man, but highly cultured, gentlemanly and sincere. Still as I scanned him in the "Friend of Italy" office the thought would not flee: A pretty fellow you are to put yourself against Moses, Isaiah, and Paul. You must mount many miles of ladder ere you can spit on their faces. You had better let that matter alone.

Ah! but Mazzini is another kind of person altogether. What a white capacious forehead! What a mass of blackness opens like a dark star in his eye, what firmness in his mouth, and how his words came forth from his lips through that grizzly beard, like sharp cutting winds from a forest! His talk is clear, strong, practical, choked almost at times with its earnestness, and the emphasis which his confused English sometimes fails to give is always supplied by his eye. I saw him only for one half-hour in the house of a Mr. Stansford, a gentleman who knows you and highly appreciates many parts of your idiosyncrasy, although I don't think that the gods have made him poetical or competent to appreciate the *best* poetry.

Thanks for your kindly and admirable analysis of your father's mind. I long for a sight of that little book of his which you praise so highly. I heard much at that same house ere Mazzini arrived about your family relationships, your grandfather Mr. Thompson, and others, which interested me greatly.

I got on better in Exeter Hall than I expected, but as usual closed my lecture with the feeling of the false position all lecturers put themselves into, or rather are pushed into by their audience. I felt this more on the Tuesday following when hearing Mr. Binney. His lecture had many striking points and much truth in it, but abounded in claptrap, and took altogether a low commercial view of the matter. That matter was: Is it possible to make the best of both worlds?—an absurd title in the first place, a low title in the second (making the best of Heaven—what an idea!), the truth actually implied in which amounts to little else than commonplace. His aim was to prove that

good men are the happiest both here and hereafter, which, in one sense of the word happiness, is not true, else why have all the great and true been the severest strugglers,—which if you understand the word in a lower sense, that namely of earthly respectability, does not need to be proclaimed, for is that not the god of all the mere mediocrities of the world; and where was the need of telling 4000 London persons that Mammon, when sprinkled with a few drops of Christian baptism, is a very decent kind of devil, almost indeed a god? It was a small, snug coach-and-six Christianity he inculcated—only better than Atheism or licentiousness—a scheme of calculation, not a Divine procession of spiritual instincts passing like solar waves over the being, and carrying it ever forward till it is stranded on heaven, and the glorious although turbulent sea becomes dry land. Yet Binney is a fine and a clever fellow, and is doing good in London.

My subject was Byron, my audience some 3000, filling the hall comfortably, and I had no reason to complain of my reception. I was forced into the thing by the Secretary coming down here from London to get me.

Smith and some others are busy starting a Scottish *Athenæum* in Glasgow. He is also working out his redaction. Were it not a pity that so many beautiful thoughts and images as his early poems contain should perish?

What has become of the comparison between Milton and Shakespeare you promised to send me?  
*Verb. Sat.*

Mrs. Gilfillan unites in kindest regards to you both. Write soon; you are now idle in a manner.



8th March, 1852.—I have promised to write a book on the Scottish Covenanters for the British Anti-State Church Association. It is a fine theme and will give me scope among other things for a little invective, a thing I rather like occasionally when the bile moves me.

Have you read Poe's works. What a strange being, and what a horrid history! It might almost at times drive you to Atheism to think of a man so rarely gifted, with such a subtle and powerful intellect, with gleams of positive inspiration lightening about him at times, and yet a wretch, a drunkard, living in hell and dying in a poorhouse. There is no tragedy in the whole sad history of genius so utterly mysterious and inscrutable as his. It was not circumstances that were to blame. The man seems from the beginning an unclean spirit determined on his own destruction, hateful too, and hating all, except sudden idols who fascinated his fancy—and who went about latterly roaring out that he was "damned," and seeming to glory in his damnation. And yet this man thought that he had found the key of the universe, gave a lecture entitled *Eureka*, containing, it is said, the most astonishing glimpses into the very depths of things, and has left some fragmentary but wonderful productions both in verse and prose with more I think of true genius in them than anything from the American mind. "Lord, what is man!"

Smith's journal has started. The first number is rather poor, barring his poem, "The Page and the Lady," which appears entire. You will find his second scene in next "Critic," a most rich and beautiful one.

[Dobell appears to have stated that Dr. Samuel Brown was engaged with a work on the Covenanters.]

11th May, 1852.—Many thanks for the information, but I do not see what can be done. I am engaged positively for a certain sum, and at a certain time to write for the British Anti-State-Church Association a work of 256 pages, consisting of sketches rather than a history of the covenanting era, and with a distinct bearing on the question of Church and State. Brown's will be an altogether different business. Besides, I have collected materials at some cost and pains, have told many that I am at it, and have written a very considerable portion of it already. I cannot, therefore, alter the arrangement. This I regret both for my own sake and Brown's.

By the way, I respect Brown much, but quietly think that you enormously overrate him. He has talent, great energy, readiness, enthusiasm, but his old fellow-students would look aghast if they heard of his learning. As to blood—one of my ancestors was in Dunottar Castle for the Covenant—and don't you mind "Gifted Gilfillan" in "Waverley." But, seriously, there is ample room for both of us; I will sketch the outline, and he will fill up the details.

Should he hear of my book, pray assure him that I have not the slightest intention of coming in contact with him, and regret now that I selected the subject, for it was my selection, at all.

9th January, 1853.—I am editing two books, the one, the works of a poor poet, Nevay of Forfar, and the other the sermons of a deceased divine.

I am glad you like Anderson [the "Surfaceman"]. He is a modest youth with a good gift. He was greatly pleased with you and your reception of him.

Smith is lucky in his first venture. I had a curious letter from his minister about him, deploring his irregularity in attending church. I intend to urge Smith to go to some church at least.

My "Covenanters" are in, and I suppose, well through their third thousand. I suppose you have never seen them yet.

12th April, 1853.—I shall take an opportunity soon of transmitting your message to Smith. His reception has been very kind, but not more so than the merits of his book deserve. His poetry has struck the Scottish lovers of poetry more than anything of Scottish parentage for twenty years, and had the London journals received it rudely they had only murdered the small modicum of value which we here and many there, too, set upon their critical judgment.

As to plagiarism, I really wonder at the charge, the more as I have been going over lately, in an editorial capacity, all Milton's poetry, and find twenty plagiarisms in your sense of the term, in every fifty lines. I don't believe there is one *conscious* plagiarism in all the "Life Drama," and all the finer passages, such as the "Garden and the Child," the "Page and the Lady," are entirely free from even resemblance to others. And this is all the more astonishing as the poor fellow has had time to read little but poetry, and that chiefly too of one school. Nothing but unavoidable originality could have so saved him. The things you quote from Shelley, Smith has greatly

improved, turning nonsense into beauty. "Bright lovely beast," applied to fire, is absurd. "Bright wild beast," applied to lightning is noble. An "orbed maiden walking through the night" is barely sense. A "naked maiden" passing, like Godiva, through the heavens, is a beautiful thought.

You will be glad to hear that Glasgow is doing its duty to him, has bought 500 copies of his poem, and that its Parliamentary members are moving heaven and earth for his advancement. This is as it should be.

I have forwarded your note to poor Nevay.

I am glad your poem is so near completion. Much will depend on its being ahead of your former. A second poem *must* be better than a first. It is unalterable literary etiquette. And "Chamouni" gives me high hopes.

I am about to bring out a new poet, one Bigg in Ulverston. I think I mentioned him to you before. He has much more culture than Smith, and a subtler if not so strong a genius. I intend to do with him precisely as I did with Smith—*i.e.*, write a notice with copious extracts, and then publish his poem piece-meal in the *Critic*.

I was sure you would be astonished at Brown's *life* and ambidextrous energy. Poor fellow, he has had a strange, and in many things, an unhappy life. I don't know if he yet has found what his true work is. It is not, I fear, a revolution in chemistry. His real position in a worldly sense should have been a Professor's chair.

The first volume of the "Poets" [Nichol's Series] appears in a day or two. It will be a very cheap and very handsome edition, and promises to have a large



sale. Its strength will lie, apart from the prefaces, in correctness of text and clearness and beauty of type, and in absence of all but strictly necessary notes. It has given me the great satisfaction of a complete reperusal of all Milton's poetry, with feelings of renewed wonder. Don't you know that I think "Samson Agonistes" the most powerful thing he did? There is in it more of the Æschylean or Dantesque rugged power. It accomplishes equal effects at less apparent expenditure. It has all the power without the efflorescence of Job, and rises almost to the severe and simple majesty of Moses. It is no Hymettus humming with bees and decked with flowers; it is a Sinai bared by Divine fire, blackened by the frown of the Eternal.

No spring here yet! Cold, bleak skies, and a new moon with edges as sharp and blue as the points of a pitchfork.

31st May, 1853.—Right glad I am to hear that there is even a "possibility" of our meeting this autumn. I trust it will be, and turn out, a profitable as well as delightful reunion. Give me due notice, and I shall manage that you meet some others far more worthy than I.

I heard from Tucker of Bath that you were poorly, and I need not say how deeply I sympathise with all your sorrows. It has long seemed to me that bodily health is the one thing you want to assert yourself as one of our greatest spiritual potentates, and that God only can supply. But His promise is: "As thy day, so thy strength."

Tucker has decided promise, but is too much bit by

*your* prose style, which he cannot always adequately handle.

I have my doubts about the success of Wight's scheme,\* but intend to do all for him I can. I intend beginning to-morrow a paper on Burke for his first number. De Quincey and Aird have both promised him something.

My labours are still very weighty. The new edition of the "Poets" promises to succeed, but will entail on me a burden of constant work for years—*i.e.*, if the scheme goes on. I am busy at present with Thomson. He is a true poet, but in a style and manner compared to Milton, whom I read last, how coarse and clumsy! He is an inspired boor of the Dutch or rather Cape of Good Hope species.

I have a letter from my brother-in-law in Australia. He tells me he saw lately a guinea copy of my "Bards" in Melbourne, and was of course well pleased. Is this, or is it not, true fame?

Mrs. Stowe was here lately. She is, let the Exeter Hall idiots say what they please—and they don't admire, though they cheered her—a noble woman, reminding me of the Ruths, Maries, and Marthas of the past. How meekly she bears her unparalleled honours, and what genuine humanity and Christianity (but this is pleonasm and repetition, for humanity and Christianity rightly understood are one) ooze out from every cranny of her constitution! God bless her! Her appearance and reception here—that meek, plain woman, a year ago utterly unknown—gave me a thrill of sublime emotion I seldom have experienced in all

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\* New series of *Hogg's Instructor*.

my life. It seemed a minute of the Millennium sent before its time.

Do write me now and then.

Mrs. Gilfillan unites in love to Mrs. Dobell and yourself.

22nd July, 1853.—I had almost given you up for lost or dead when your welcome letter came in. Short as it is, it contains matter both of much joy and much sorrow; joy that your poem is so near completion, and sorrow that poor Mrs. Dobell's health seems so hopeless. If she die, I fear she will not die alone. God open up some way amid those dark hills of her pilgrimage! I have never till now lost hopes of her recovery.

I am glad you have seen and that you love Smith. I see his appearance has disappointed the Londoners, who were expecting a "curled darling." Bigg comes out next *Critic*.

Since I got your note I have read "Love in Idleness," and see in it the promise of a very powerful tale on a most original plan. *Perge puella*. Is she a relation of the novelist?

I am glad you like Milton. It has been very well received. Thomson is now ready, and I have begun Herbert. Ah! divine old George! What a contrast to Jemmy Thomson, what a contrast to almost all men and pastors! Indeed, the standard he sets up is so hopelessly high, that I am not sure but it does me more ill than good. It is to me a "sad sight" when I compare him with myself and others. His life and Milton's poetry alike drive me to despair as equally inimitable. But does not Christ do this far

more? And yet is not His image hung up before every eye as a model?

Yes, dear friend, these are fearful times. The end of all things seems to be at hand. I have had a good deal of interesting conversation with a very promising youth named —— (you will see his hand in the September *Hogg* in a paper on my Milton). He is a divinity student, but is plunging in the deepest waters of doubt and is driven almost to despair, and may, I fear, be thrown violently back into the mere world and its pollutions—from the uncertainty of his religious creed. And, alas! he is a specimen of thousands. I strongly urged him to go onward to the church, and to wait and pray for light; but he seems reluctant. He is irritated, too, by the severe criticisms of the Presbytery on his sermons, which are exuberant to a fault, and may thus be lost to the church through the same bad and ungenerous style of judgment which lost Keats to poetry. And yet I verily believe that, were I in his position, I could not take my own advice.

But the morning cometh as well as the night. We can do little but watch for it; yet it is all our hope.

Mrs. Gilfillan was drooping much in spring, but is considerably better since this most flushed and leafy of all leafy summers has come in.

She joins me in kind love to yourself, and sympathy with your dear sufferer.

4th October, 1853.—Your silence would have been surprising were it not that I heard indirectly (through Tucker) that you were busy with your poem. I long to see it, the more as your plan seems to be somewhat



obscure. How can natural goodness return to restore the world? I thought our common creed was that Divine interference is to be the main instrument in that restoration. I rather regret your choice of the allegory, though I have no fear as to your management of it. A long allegory in verse is a dangerous experiment. I speak, however, in profound darkness lighted up only by my faith in your genius. I shall count the days till it appears.

If it comes forth in November it will issue simultaneously with a little book of mine, written at the request of a London house, entitled "The Grand Discovery; or, The Fatherhood of God," a tractate embodying an outline of what at present is my creed. I do not expect you to agree with it all, but I think you will like it as a piece of writing. My object is to inculcate a doctrine you hold—namely, that without a Revelation we never could have reached any certain knowledge of a Divine Father. I have interspersed it with a few blows at Carlyleism, &c. I preached the substance of it in two discourses to large and intellectual audiences in Leith, beside Edinburgh, ten days ago, and was glad of the opportunity, in the presence of many savans and sucking Emersonians, of declaring my contempt for their hope and faith, and of hanging up before their eyes the old banner of the Cross.

This, along with my editorial work at the poets and my usual periodicalising, has filled up my autumn pleasantly. It has been on the whole a changeful season; but there have been many glorious exceptional days, which I have enjoyed all the more that they were exceptions. What a Divine day, for instance, was last Sabbath! It seemed one of the

days of Heaven in its spotless serenity, its clear cool and holy quiet.

I had a call from Smith some six weeks ago. He has been delighted with his visit to Coxhorne, and gave me very pleasing accounts of Mrs. Dobell, yourself, and your inmate, Miss James. I once thought of rallying him upon this last subject, so warm were his eulogiums upon her. I have just finished a paper on his poetry for the *Eclectic*, which, strange to say, although the first to introduce him in extracts, has never noticed his whole poem. I have, amid much praise, given him some solid and seasonable counsel.

30th November, 1853.—I am here in the north among my darling little nieces and nephews, whose society is my dearest pleasure, and have had your note forwarded to me. I regret the delay of Balder. I had promised to write a notice of it for Hogg's January number, if it came at all in time. I had besides promised myself a *bonne bouche* from it when I returned ; but I must now have patience.

I saw Smith in Glasgow since, I think, I wrote you last. He was on the wing for the Duke of Argyll's, who had, very handsomely, invited him to spend some days at his castle of Inveraray. He writes me since that he has enjoyed himself. He is at present in Ireland visiting Lord Dufferin, a friend of Mrs. Norton's. I hope the Duke will do him some substantial good by getting a bank or Government office for him. He has written about one thousand lines of a new poem. I hope to see it soon in MS.

I had a note from Bailey two days ago. He is superintending a new volume of poems by one Brad-

bury. I had it under my eye last spring, but did not admire it, except some individual lines.

Samuel Brown is back to Edinburgh, but continues in very poor, precarious health.

I must close. Give my kind love to Mrs. Dobell and your father and mother.

24th January, 1854.—I cannot yet fix the time for being over [in Edinburgh]; only I fear it won't be next week. I shall let you know in due season.

Prepare for severe criticism. Your Balder has disappointed many of your warmest admirers. It did not me, because from the extracts you sent me I was prepared for all its faults, although not prepared for all its beauties. It has raised my opinion of your genius which was, you are well aware, very high before; but I regret that it is not a higher step towards that pedestal of popularity and power whence you meant to preach Christianity to the young age. God strengthen you for reaching it soon.

I have read the *Athenæum*. Its *animus* is evident, its criticism contemptible in much, but not in this, that it is a faithful daguerreotype of the prevailing opinion about your poem, and you, like all who appeal to the public, should know and profit by such a deliverance, painful as it may be to flesh and blood. In my criticism (written after a first reading—the book has been lent, and I have not yet had the opportunity of a second), you will find a summary of both sides, the scales of course, predominating in the proper direction. I must, however, honestly say, that had I seen Balder as a whole, ere it appeared, I should have demurred to its publication, since as

a piece of poetical power it is wondrous, but as an act in the great drama of your genius it rather hinders than helps the catastrophe.

13th May, 1854.—Your kind little note was awaiting me when I to-day returned—sad and silent, solitary and unutterably strange—from my mother's funeral. She was yesterday entombed among the monumental hills of Comrie, and my feelings were, strange to say, nearly as hard as that granite which only the earthquake ever shakes. I could not weep although my mind was bursting within with emotion. I felt as if I were burying something besides my mother in that grave; but what was it? Something whispered in my heart—"All except my twin Bold Conceptions, and my love to Christ." These are the very words which streamed through me. I scarcely know what they meant; and yet I think I do.

You know not—long may you not know!—what it is to see the spirit of a mother as it were imprisoned in a cold clayey corpse, and yet seeming to smile up as though it saw itself transfigured in that Heaven above which is visible to it alone. You have seen the cloud smiling long after the sun is set, and thus doth the clay smile and shine after its sun of soul is set to it—for ever?

I rose to-day from a short miserable sleep at four morning, and came over dreary moors, relieved however, by the sight of the grand, sullen, tortured Grampians on the north. The "morning was spread upon the mountains," and I felt as if it were conspiring in all its beams to write *Resurgam* on my mother's grave which lay slumbering below them. The white



church, too, beside the tomb appeared to become whiter as with electric light, and the young foliage of the woods behind, absolutely glared with yellow, green, and gold. Yet the sight soothed me not. I felt the impotence of Nature as I have seldom felt it before, and that "at its best estate it is altogether vanity," like everything else except Hope.

I have been all day in a dream not of the happiest sort, although I have managed, besides a good deal else, to write a kind of funeral sermon for my dear mother. Our dear little lamb, Agnes Vallentine by name, sprang into my arms when I arrived and did all she could to fondle me back to consciousness and peace. I was "poor dear Uncley that had been burying my Mother."

Margaret, who has felt the blow nearly as much as myself, unites in kind regards to yourself and your ladies.

3rd August, 1854.—I regret I missed you at Glasgow. Kossuth's appearance disappointed everybody, and his speeches me.\* He struck me rather as a man of amazing agility than of great depth or true poetic inspiration. Mazzini is a greater, although not so good a man. The conversazione was a tissue of solemn twaddle.

I feel this heat very oppressive, and my wife is quite paralysed with it. I have not done much accordingly for a week or two. If there be a paper in the *Eclectic* on Balder it is not mine. I have not had time to write one. I am to reprint my former one with some additional remarks in the "Third

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\* This was Mr. Gilfillan's later judgment of Kossuth.

Gallery," which you have seen announced in *Hogg* as preparing for publication. *Fraser* and *Gorrie* on it were both good, *Chambers* poor, halting, not gracefully, between two opinions.

Oh for a breath of right mountain air! I intend in a fortnight going to Aberdeenshire for a few days, and in a month or six weeks dashing over once more amidst the glorious and terrible wildernesses of Glencoe.

I sent a youth, Gordon, to you. Did he call? He has not sent me his poetry; but my table is as usual loaded with that of others. I have returned within two months sixteen packets of poetry, some of them in folio, and others are pressing in. Bigg's poem seems decidedly making way.

## LETTERS TO THOMAS AIRD.

THOMAS AIRD was born in August, 1802, in the parish of Bowden, Roxburghshire, under the shadow of the Eildons, into one of those bright, contented Scottish homes where the light of piety burned with cheerful steady flame; and from beginning to end, religion governed his life. At the University of Edinburgh he made the acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle, and the friendship continued. Designed for the church, Aird found his diffidence an obstacle, and preferred a literary life. His first venture, a tragedy named *Murtzoufle* with some other poems, published in 1826, made but little mark, though the volume contained one of his tenderest pieces, "My Mother's Grave." His next work, "Religious Characteristics," a series of prose themes, brought him into notice. It won high praise from Professor Wilson, and gained for the author admission into *Blackwood*. In 1835, after editing a paper in Edinburgh for a short time, he removed to Dumfries. "The newspaper," he said, "is the gospel of God's daily providence working in man's world;" and this ideal he strove to fulfil in conducting the local *Herald*.

In 1839 he published "Othuriel and other poems;" in 1845, "The Old Bachelor in the Old Scottish Village;" and in 1848, with the full edition of his

poems, "The Devil's Dream on Mount Aksbeck," his imaginative climax.

A number of letters addressed by him to Mr. Gilfillan will be found in the memoir prefixed to the last edition of his poems, published in 1878. They breathe the spirit of genuine regard and cordial sympathy, all the more notable inasmuch as the friends differed on many points, religious and political. In November, 1845, no doubt referring to the publication of Gilfillan's first "Gallery," Carlyle wrote to Aird :—"I will attend well to what you say about Gilfillan, and certainly, if I can do him any good on such an occasion, it will be a duty as well as a pleasure to me. My personal connection with Reviews, &c., has altogether ceased for a long while ; nor, indeed, is there any clear way of seeking to give furtherance to a man of real merit, amid the crowd of empty pretenders and of false judges that we have at present. But it is the more incumbent on one to do what is possible, and in that I will endeavour not to fail as occasion serves."

In December, 1842, Aird wrote to Gilfillan, acknowledging an article :—"I am under renewed and special obligations to you for 'Honest Allan' [Cunningham]. As he has many friends here it will be cordially received. The sketch is one of your richest. If faulty, it is in its enormous exuberances of poetry. The Sea, the giant of the young world, and the Painter are glorious excrescences. Would half the world could sin in such abundance ! And yet you hit off Allan's characteristics well. I have sent a copy to your friend Mrs. Carlyle. They were intimate with Allan, and she will clip out your article and place it with your portraiture of her own Thomas."

Again, in October, 1845, Mr. Aird writes :—"Thanks



to good, prim, narrow, strait Mr. Hogg, who, I daresay, is frightened out of his wits by your audacities, I have got two of the finest articles I ever had in our paper. May the man live for ever in a snail-cup, with that alms-basket of scraps of his for baiting mouse-traps, if more of that large manna may but drop in my hungry way. Your Tennyson is not so elaborate as some of your former worthies ; but oh ! he is right pleasant, profound, and yet airy and buoyant. '*Gloomy grandeur*' is your characteristic, so said Carlyle to me a few nights ago, partly in praise, partly in blame. There are touches of it in your Tennyson, but rightly used and finely relieved. . . . Both Delta and Carlyle have told me lately that you magnify trifles too much by overheated enthusiasm. This is your great fault. Be composed, and I will guarantee your picturesque powers won't fail you. Effect dwells in a zone of quiet. Pardon this preaching."

From a letter of Aird's, of 1st February, 1849, the following is extracted :—"Manifold thanks for the most vivid piece of etching ever burned in upon my page. I have just softened a point or two of the savage graphic, and now let the public up and at it ! For myself I never enjoyed anything more heartily—so exuberantly vital is it with all sorts of life. I could not refrain—pardon me if I have done amiss—from cutting out from your second lecture a perfect poem, set to the music of the spheres, and giving it in the same number of our paper as a variety of your power. I cut off the associations of Exeter Hall, and one or two bits of mere lecturing cleverness. Look at the thing as it now stands up to the firmament in its majestic and immortal harmony. The piece

was so vividly defined and unique on my own mind that I was impelled to do as I have done."

These are specimens of the correspondence on Aird's side. It continued till the genial poet-editor died in 1876. On the 25th April of that year he had risen and read his usual portions of Scripture. With him were his niece, Miss Smith, and Miss Thorburn, with whom he conversed for a little in a composed and cheerful manner, knowing that the end was near. Then one of the ladies read to him an article of Mr. Gilfillan's. She had just finished when the final change began. In an hour he expired.

GILFILLAN TO AIRD :—

19th August, 1848.—You ask me of my own doings. I am in a good way among the Prophets [for "Bards of the Bible"], and like the subject well. I think that by blending modern literary criticism with that of the Hebrew Bards, by thus moderating and relieving my raptures of admiration, and by shunning all sectarian points, I may make the book at once catholic and interesting.

In this book on the Hebrews I intend collecting, or rather am without intention collecting, the essence of my sermonising for many past years; and shall avoid all thorny points, and give out the strength of my early and later impressions of that highest voice of Past, Present, or Future Poetry. I cannot, therefore, I conceive, be better employed than I am at present. Ten years of further experience must, if I live, and will be needed to qualify me for that grander theme—The Reconciliation of Man. Thanks, nevertheless, for your friendly counsel.

I have been reading and writing on Sterling's

Remains. Poor fellow! what a typical character did he unconsciously sustain, typical of most of the young, ardent, honest, and baffled enquirers of the day. Professor Blackie, of Aberdeen, has issued and sent me a pamphlet on University Reform, very bold, pithy, and, in my judgment, true. Emerson has sent me the American edition of his Essays, which contains some striking verses not in the English one. From Dr. Croly I heard the other day, inclosing a sermon on marriage, short, able, and stringent, though I don't agree with all his sentiments. Binney and he outvie each other in peppering me with pamphlets and praise. What a *tertium quid* I be! What I value far more than the voice of newspapers, I have received—various private letters both from England and Scotland anent my “Milton.”\*

27th October, 1848.—What are you doing or projecting? I long for your poems. I wrote to Moxon, offering him the second edition of the “Gallery” and a new Gallery, but he declines, pleading bad times. I have not yet tried any other.

I am working steadily and pleasurably at the Hebrews. I have just finished Job to my own satisfaction so far. I feel Isaiah approaching. What an orb of light and flame!

I have written two papers on Sterling in this part of *Hogg*. I sent them to Carlyle, who has written me a very noble note of warm approbation. I intend beginning a paper on Longfellow for a Liverpool bookseller (who is reprinting his poems), *pro* ten guineas.

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\* Article in *Tait's Magazine*.

I have refused almost all lecturing engagements this season from Edinburgh, Manchester, &c.; but have been prevailed on to give one in London for the Metropolitan Early Closing Association sometime in December. I must pull up, as Croly and Alison are among the list.

26th December, 1848.—Here I am, safe from a very pleasant little trip. I never enjoyed a journey more. I saw all the persons I wished to see. I had two forenoon hours of Croly, who was very kind and possesses all the sturdy qualities I had given him credit for. He honoured me by coming to my last lecture. He is busy at a second *Salathiel*. Mary Howitt wrote me to call, and I did. She is really a most sensible and lady-like person, and has a delightful family. I did not see her lord. I spent an hour with Leigh Hunt. Poor fellow! he is, I fear, breaking up or down. Our conversation took rather a serious turn. I think he has good tendencies, though his views seem weak and sentimentally *wersh*. He told me some interesting stories of Shelley and Hazlitt. I had a long night of four hours with Carlyle, who was in good trim and high talk. He dilated on Chalmers, Irving, and Brougham. Had his lordship heard his picture of him, so terribly true and graphic, and with such hell-stuffing of invective in it, he had gone away and hanged himself straight-way. Mrs. C. dropped out some capital things too. Both were very cordial. I saw also, or rather met with, Philips of "Bunyan," a good, weak man; Binney, an enlightened, talented, though somewhat erratic being; Dr. Harris of "Mammon," &c., a capi-



tal fellow, full of fun, intelligence, and without an atom of cant ; Drs. Morrison, Fletcher, and Leifchild, all good specimens of their different kinds. Bob Montgomery wrote me—can you believe it?—to come and hear him preach, and afterwards go home and sup with him.

I lectured to 2000 people in Exeter Hall. They were very enthusiastic. My last lecture was not so well attended owing to their raising the price, as well as to the out-of-the-wayness of the chapel, but was well received. I preached to a crowded and very attentive audience in Binney's chapel on Sabbath evening.

I saw Brown both coming and going. He is well and busy. He has written a play on Galileo, which you may perhaps soon see in *Blackwood*. I have not seen it, but it is said to be magnificent.

I found waiting me an offer, through Troup, of the Belfast English Literature Chair. I declined. I am comfortable enough, now, where I am. Don't you think I was right? Were I ever to feel uneasy in my position, other openings might occur.

24th May, 1849.—Thanks for the sweet and true little poem you sent me. It is *vraisemblable* and tender.

I am on the eve of going to Glasgow for a few days, taking Comrie in my way back. The weather promises beautifully. I preach for MacGill, who is away to the Highlands. By the way, he was referring lately with great delight to you and to that delightful day at Glamis. He is preparing a life of his father-in-law, Dr. Heugh, and has got a few Sabbaths' leisure

from his people. He is doing extremely well as a minister.

I am now fairly in among the Prophets. I wrote Isaiah seven years ago. I read it lately to Brown, who considered it the best thing I had ever done. W. Anderson and Binney, who heard me preach it, had the same opinion. I am now at Jeremiah, and feel the hot, hurried breath of Ezekiel drawing near. The book will be out by January, I think, at farthest. Previously, Hogg publishes a second "Gallery," including the best of my later sketches, about the size of the first—a small edition—and afterwards brings out both "Galleries" in a cheap form.

Did I not say how much I liked Brown's "Scott"? He wrote it in seven days! What a wonderful writer he might be were he giving up the furnace! He is to be married on the 1st of June. This will give him ballast. . . .

*3rd September, 1849.*—I spent the forenoon of last Wednesday with Carlyle. Erskine apprised me of his being at Linlathen, and I went there. He, C., and I walked down to the sea-side, where Carlyle and I bathed. He seems in high health and good spirits, and is, as usual, full of talk. We enjoyed the morning much. I suppose by this time he has gone North.

I shall think of what you say anent the "Bards." I am myself inclined to publishing them all at once.

Carlyle had been at Glamis. I do not think he cares much for scenery. He spoke with no enthusiasm about Glamis.

19th November, 1849.—I ought to have answered you ere this, but have been busy with many things. My "Gallery" is to be issued in a fortnight or less. You will get a copy, of course. Only two papers in it are split new—those on Bailey and Hunt. But possibly you had not seen or read some of the *Hogg* articles. Contrast my 1845 anxieties with my comparative indifference now. I have done with *republican* sketches for ever, whatever I may write.

Did I ever speak to you of one Sydney Yendys, a Cheltenham youth of twenty-five? He sent me lately his completed poem, "The Roman," which I predict will establish him as one of the most rising of our poets. It is really a brilliant production, all "air and fire," yet with deep, condensed, reflective single lines and occasional slight touches, like the pressure of a giant's fingers, which give assurance of a wondrous premature manhood. It is sprinkled, too, with exquisite musical and tender lyrics. He is away to London to get it published. I have the highest hopes of him. He will make Tennyson look to his laurels.

14th January, 1850.—I had not seen or heard of the *Athenæum* onset. I have searched for it since, but in vain. It will not, even if I see it, break my heart. Such paper pellets have almost lost their power. Besides, I throw them so often myself, that I cannot complain if I am hit in return. Only I am never consciously unjust or unfair. The only thing that annoys me about this is that it was to Marston, at the *A.* office, I sent the volume. Now, from the friendly terms we were upon when he was here, I might have expected common justice, if not friendly recognition.

However, let us remember the two great texts, "Cease from man," and "Wisdom is justified of her children."

MacPhail on "Aytoun" refreshed me much on Saturday. It is smashing and true. You see the big boy blubbing under it like a beaten school-boy. It is by neither Landreth nor Brown, I calculate. It is liker MacCulloch of Denny, who did "Notes or No Notes." However, I am only certain on the negative side.

"Galileo" [by Dr. S. Brown] has glorious touches, and contains the germ of great dramatic power, but has not the full roundness of contour or richness of colouring you would have expected. It is rather an interesting experiment than a finished thing. He has not burnt his fingers, although he has not succeeded in "carrying a fire in his hand." I am writing an article on it for the March *Eclectic*—the leading one it will be. De Quincey follows in April, I hope. I have written the half of both.

I have two lectures next week—one in Cupar-Fife, the other in St. Andrews; and then I close my lecturing career *for ever*, except now and then in Dundee. It is an awful waste of time, strength, and nervous energy. By the way, Brown lectures here in February, when, of course, we shall have him with us. Would you were with us too.

The "Bards" are rather hanging fire. I intend soon taking a fierce fortnight entirely to the work and fairly finishing it. I have but five chapters to do.

Yendys has been up in London trying to get his poem out. He has seen Carlyle and Croly. He did not take much to the latter, and was saddened by Carlyle's hopeless gloom. He is doing a review of



me for somewhere. You have no idea what a brilliant thing "The Roman" is. Shelley, at twenty-five, had done nothing like it. I suspect he has failed in his first application. But he will print it on his own account.

4th March, 1850.—Brown has got into a row with the London *Banner* about a supposed infidel sentence in his paper on me. I am fortunately not implicated in the matter, and though efforts on both sides have been made to draw me in, I intend to keep aloof. Brown has been, I think, decidedly, however, ill-used in the matter. I shall probably send you the *Banners* in a few days. Campbell is one of your hard-headed, Andrew Thomson kind of men, and cannot appreciate a subtly poetic and philosophic mind like Brown's.

I got a good deal of time last week to the Bards. I am at the "Poetry of Jesus." By the way, Emerson's silence in his new book, which I have just read, in reference to *Him*, is insulting, and must recoil with vengeance on his own head. Otherwise the book is exceedingly wise and beautiful. "It smiles, and it is cold."

I am glad you have given poor —— a lift. I owed him some separate grudges for acts of insolence and folly, but forgot them all like a Christian, and walked deftly over the belly of my conscience. I hope he will do well.

I am somewhat tired. Yesterday I preached thrice, and in the evening was up on Carmel with Elijah watching the "man's hand," and am rather fatigued with the ascent.

*P.S.*—I was glad to see your notice of Sydney Yendys. Have you a spare paper containing it that you could send me to transmit to him. Bailey has sent me the "Angel World." It is far beneath the level of Festus.

*April, 1850.*—I sent you yesterday Yendys' noble "Roman." Is it not worthy of the name? I think that since Byron's dramas we have had no such fiery and vigorous verse. And yet there is no imitation, although here and there I trace a resemblance. Tell me what you think of the scene with the father, mother and child, of the "Winter Night," the vision of Romulus, and the scene in the dungeon, closing with "'Tis a hard saying, who can bear it?" Here is a poet of mettle and manhood, not of mystical cant, once more among us, and only twenty-six.

By the way, if you wish to write him or send him a notice, his address is S. Y. Dobell, Coxhorne House, near Cheltenham. He was much gratified at your little word about him, and will take a letter kindly. I have sent another copy to Brown. You, he, and myself are his selected Scottish three.

I am working occasionally at the Bards. The putting off the publication has relieved and liberated me, and I now go to it at glad intervals, often on Sabbath evenings.

*20th May, 1850.*—Samuel Brown has returned home. He is better, but not quite well. There is a mystery about his chymical experiments which neither Nichol nor I can fathom. Yet we are loth to relinquish our cherished belief in him.

23rd July, 1850.—We were at Comrie last week. I was jaded with heat and hard work, my wife ill with a clinging summer cold. We have both returned better, though she is still very delicate. . . . I enjoyed the felicity of bathing in some of my old favourite pools. The weather was very hot, and the country a perfect sunburnt beauty. Some fine showers, however, we had, and the thunder growled gloriously in the distance over Loch Tay.

I am glad you like the *Palladium*. It has been well received. The *Sun* is very laudatory. Yendys rather overdoes his part so far as I am concerned; but then he is a prophet not a panegyrist. A noble gifted spirit, certes: my only fear is that he too soon commits his genius to the glorification of a creed, peculiar, although Christian, which he seems to have unalterably formed. His paper is incomparably the best in the number; and with the exception of Brown, I know of no rising man in the country worthy of tying his shoe-latchets. Brown, by the way, is preparing a paper for the British Association on his discoveries. I hope to hear it on the spot.

Hogg, the publisher, has been here to-day for a few hours. He has sold 700 of the "Second Gallery," and brought me £40 therefor. So soon as 100 or 150 more are reached, he is to bring out a new edition of the "First Gallery" in the shape of Chambers's editions of Crabbe, &c., for 2s. 6d. I fancy he is *anxious* to get the "Bards." I rather think I will give him them, though it will be a sacrifice in more ways than one. But I am not greedy of money, and even to praise I am vastly more indifferent than I was. . . .

I have got to Paul in the Bards. Looking over the

book, as I do often, from beginning to end, I think it will be more of a whole than my first two. Coming back, also, to my first burning impressions, it must be a sincerity.

Christopher North, by the way, likes the *Palladium* much, so he told one lately. The small creatures of the *Caledonian Mercury*, *Scottish Press*, &c., have been abusing it all, except its worst article.

I have at present the prospect of two or three comparatively idle weeks. I intend (*D.V.*) during them to indite a Robespierre for *Hogg*, and to finish Paul. What a contrast of character and work.

20th August, 1850.—I am happy to say that my people last Wednesday unanimously raised my stipend, without any request or hint on my part, from £150 to £180, and mean, as soon as possible, to raise it further. This is cheering, and calls for thankfulness. They are at present very prosperous, more so than for thirteen years. It is curious, they were raising my stipend at the very moment that a large number of Chartists in Bell St. Hall were trying to howl me down for proposing a monument to Peel. Of course I did not succumb, but treated them with the contempt they deserved. They are a sad set.

I am writing a paper on Smibert's Clans for the *Eclectic*, and beginning one on the "Great Poem Mysteries, No. 1—Job," in the *Palladium*. I mean to go down through Prometheus, Faust, Cain, Festus.

17th September, 1850.—Yendys does exaggerate a little, doubtless, but it is an amiable quality, and will modify mightily as he goes on. Remember he is only



beginning his first "Gallery," about the same age, too, as when I commenced mine. But I don't think galleryfying his forte. He is a poet, and also strongest in rhyme. Its fetters clash in fire around, and inspire, instead of retarding, his mind. As to Jane Eyre he is right. I read it lately, and it is a most delicious production—so romantically true. But he prophesies too much of the author. He will learn better to value *ifs* and *buts* by-and-by. . . .

18th November, 1850.—The "Bards" are now fairly off my hands. Perhaps you may get a copy this week. It will be a handsome volume, and not too long. I am writing a preface to "Specimens of English Poets," published by Walker, who issued Longfellow. I will send you a copy of it, as I am to get a lot of spare ones. He has hampered me in room, allowing me only sixteen pages. This has cramped me somewhat, but it is a fair *vidimus* so far as it goes.

Wm. Smith is to have a paper on you in next *Palladium*. I have promised No. 2 of the "Mysteries" for January. The subject is a great one—Prometheus Bound and Unbound. I have got Blackie's "Æschylus," and have been reading Prometheus for the second time—I read it eighteen years ago. It is noble, but bare compared to Job. The introduction of Io is a gross excrescence, carried at least so far as it is. Depend on it, we overrate those Grecian fellows. They are cultured babes beside the Hebrews—the unshorn giants.

17th December, 1850.—I must thank you, however

shortly, for your very kind notice of the "Bards." It was that rather of a brother than a friend.

I am home from my journey [to England; see letter to Dobell] pleased, gratified, a gainer, but terribly tired—ill, and resolute never to take such a protracted engagement again. On Friday I came home. On Saturday morning I felt all sore and knocked to pieces, and yet I had to preach three times on Sabbath. I got through with much pain and difficulty, and have since been in the house. I had, yestreen, a long, dreary night of pain and troubled sleep, but am rather better to-day. Travelling 1000 miles, speaking nine nights, with but one resting night among them, those everlasting bores of all lecturers, dinners, suppers, breakfasts, all in parties, besides sight-seeings, have shaken me as I have not been shaken for years. I must lie fallow for a fortnight.

I met with great kindness, in Bradford and Newcastle especially—I mean in public. In private all places were alike pleasant. I made twenty-two guineas clear, but have bought it rather dearly by illness and utter exhaustion.

Hogg writes me the "Bards" are doing well. The *Morning Advertiser* had a very abusive, but very stupid, attack, mixed, however, with great praise, on Saturday last. Brown and Craig both think it my best approach to a "Work." Yendys does not like "Job," but dotes on the Introduction, "Ezekiel," and the "Destiny of the Bible." What think you of this last? It is a broad blow in the face of our present state and views as churches, and won't please some people. But it was written in deepest sincerity.

31st December, 1850.—A good New Year to Sarah and yourself! Mrs. Gilfillan joins cordially in the best wishes of the season.

I am still hearing good news of the "Bards." Dr. Eadie, my ancient opponent, writes me to-day in a very friendly spirit. He is to notice it in the *United Presbyterian Magazine*. Dr. Croly, too, and De Quincey are both highly pleased. Dr. C. is to review it somewhere. About 100 copies have gone off in Dundee alone, and there are more demands.

Read Yendys this month in the front rank of the *Palladium* on Newman, and tell me your opinion. I think parts of it transcendent in *thought* as well as in eloquence. He is a noble fellow, as profound as brilliant, and may yet do his greatest things. He aims at the epic. I don't think such things as "Crazed," beautiful as it is, are suited for him. They are rather rests than exercises of his genius.

Dr. J. Carlyle spent some hours here on Friday last. He is a fine, knowing fellow, although his resemblance to his brother in tone and talk is so great as to be disagreeable at times. He has more *bonhomie*, however. I was mortified at the way in which he spoke of the "Roman." But both he and Thomas have made up their minds that there shall be no more poetry nor poets. If you see him soon, tell him I am better. He seemed to think me worse than I was.

I am impatient to get your objections to the "Bards" in full tale. I think I now see the most of its weak points pretty clearly, and can remedy some of them easily enough. The supplementary chapter was written too late for insertion in the body of the book, and somewhat mars the effect. It was written—to

be out with it at once—to fill up, and the most of it in one Sabbath evening, after preaching twice. And yet it is not the worst chapter in the work. Of course it can easily be put in its proper place afterwards.

8th July, 1851.—Alas, poor Delta! How little did I dream when writing you last Friday that you were watching the beginning of his end! How strangely sudden, and out of the ordinary course has been his death! And yet I believe that nothing save the presence of his wife and children, which also he had, could have comforted him more than to die beside *you*, for there was no man he esteemed and loved more. In his second and last letter to me he spoke with much pleasure of having seen you in Dumfries a day or two before, looking so well.

There was something strange about my feelings lately toward Delta. I felt tenfold interest in him, had written a paper on him in *Hogg*, another and longer one in the *Eclectic*, which has not yet appeared, and had carried his first letter about with me till it was well-nigh torn, and shown it to everybody. I had it in my pocket when I heard to-day of his death. Nor was this from any new access of admiration for his genius, but from some sudden sympathy I could not well explain before, but can explain *now*.

Poor fellow! to die at a distance from his home, with a new flush of fame on his brow, in harness, his last poem just published in *Blackwood*; to take his death-pang in your company, and on the banks of the Nith—'twas a singular combination of circumstances. How I regret that I never met with him. And yet it is very pleasing for me to remember that we were on



terms of friendship and good-will ere he went his eternal way. Ah! if we could all realise the feelings which follow death, how ready would we be beforehand to disown our little differences, or even the graver disturbances of friendship, and remember nothing but that we had met and were soon to part.

19th August, 1851.—I see you have got Croly's new book. I have also had one sent by him. Is it not noble in parts? Read the "Furies" especially. It is the very essence of Æschylus; and how stately classical and rich the prose interspersed! The neglect of such a man is a disgrace to literature, and will be felt so one day. I hope to get you to call on him with me when in London.

While Dobell was away I got a curious letter from his father, mentioning some interesting particulars of Sydney's boyhood. At seven he was in the custom of extemporising poems, and could talk like an old man about philosophical necessity. No prodigy like this since Robert Hall. His father writes in a very sensible and Christian spirit, although he actually says that he is sure his son has "*never yet done a thing he knew to be wrong.*" Still he has fears for him. I fear his constitution more than anything else. It is evidently delicate, and his wife's is more so, and he spends more than half of his time as her nurse. He is often, too, the victim of heart complaint.

I have no news. My plans are shaping gradually before me, and my book on "Christianity and the Age" is begun. I hope to have a busy winter. I intend to refuse all *distant* lecturing engagements.

6th October, 1851.—I am now, or nearly, settled in my winter quarters; for I have still a journey to Glasgow before me ere November.

I enjoyed the trip to London amazingly on the whole. I saw all the great points of the Exhibition. It is a sparkling, vivid, varied, wonderful, hardly a *great* thing. I saw no men of mark save old Croly. I heard him preach, and was glad to find his church crowded. It was otherwise four years ago. I dined with him and liked him much. He is more genial than I had expected. By the way, he spoke highly of you and your poetry. He is not in the habit of speaking highly of many, especially of our moderns.

I heard also Henry Melville and was much pleased. He preaches every Tuesday, in the city, to a good audience. His sermon was sensible, not showy, and delivered in an easy, manly style.

I am glad you are getting along with Delta. I shall send you the only two letters I have of his when I can fish them out of an immense bag full of such things.

Did Carlyle mention having met Yendys at Malvern? I have not yet got any particulars of the interview. I long for the life of Sterling.

23rd October, 1851.—I leave for Glasgow to-morrow. I am a sort of necessary evil there once a-year at some of their sacraments. I return by Comrie. I am to be a week away.

I have as usual a great deal before me this winter. In spite of resolutions "made and provided," I have been drawn into some public engagements, none, however, at a great distance, except one lecture in Exeter

Hall in February. It is for the Young Men's Christian Association.

The British Anti-State-Church Association are also at me for a volume. They pay for and print occasionally publications in behalf of their cause. Had I three times I might occupy them all !

Did you see the *Eclectic* and notice a paper on recent poetry, with a plea at the close for one A. Smith ? This youth has sent me some really beautiful poetry. He has less mind but more music than Yendys. He is just twenty-one, and has for eleven years been employed ten hours a-day in some commercial employment.\* My plea for him has been generally responded to by the press, and the extracts from his volume, which is still in MS., commended. I shall see him in Glasgow, and give him what counsel and encouragement I can.

24th November, 1851.—I was in Glasgow lately, and saw [Professor] Nichol. He has suffered terribly since his wife's death, but is, he says, reviving. I saw also my young poet, Smith. He is a modest, but very sincere and simple-minded, rather delicate, youth. I have written an article on him for the next *Critic*, with copious extracts, and one entire and, to my mind, most beautiful little poem, "The Garden and Child." You will like it much. I know he is resigned to his present fate, that of a situation in some shawl warehouse, till something better occur. Nichol is interested in him, and is to do what he can to get him on. He

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\* Alexander Smith was employed as a designer of sewed muslins, not in a shawl warehouse as Mr. Gilfillan supposed.

abhors literature as a profession, but would like to rise in his own or some similar one.

I have had quite a campaign about Italy, Kossuth, &c., having spoken on them in all directions—here, Crieff, Arbroath, Brechin. Kossuth is a glorious man, worthy of the old heroic golden-fleece days—let the Tories and the *Times* say what they will! Just look at his speaking. Brougham sinks to an ape beside it. Such oriental grandeur of imagery and language blended with such broad, calm, statesman-like views, the genius of the East and West reconciled. Depend on it, there has been no such man in politics since Burke. And for the *Times* to class him with O'Connell is mere brutal blackguardism.

What a pity Carlyle threw in amid the genialities of his life of Sterling, those few rabid sentences of infidelity! He is getting, very properly, as you will see, scourged for them everywhere. The *Eclectic* comes out next month to the same tune. You need not show it to Mrs. Aitken.

22nd December, 1851.—You owe me a letter; but I must thank you in my own and Smith's name for your noble and generous tribute to his rising genius. It is a proud thought to me that his first letter introduced him to me as a child of my own, before he knew what I thought of his poems. It was my papers in *Hogg* which first made him read and love poetry. Glasgow is in a stir about him; and yet his letters seem as quietly modest as ever. He has, what so many of our aspiring geniuses want, common-Scotch-sense, and is, I believe, as busy among his shawls as ever. His friends are persuading him to publish, but



he is first to re-write ; secondly, to interweave his minor into his larger poem ; and thirdly, to give me the correcting of the redacted whole. Two or three publishers are waiting for his pleasure—Cox of the *Critic*, Bogue, &c.

Don't you love "The Garden and the Child?" It seems to me exquisitely *true*. It came on him he says after seeing a beautiful little girl in the Trongate, and he could not rest till he wrote it in two hours !

28th January, 1852.—I get a public dinner to-day at 4 P.M., from a number of my members, and have a good deal to do before that.

On Monday I start for London, and lecture, as aforesaid, on Tuesday. I shall be ten days away in all. I am sorry to hear of Croly's illness. He was very strong when I saw him last.

When I come back I take tooth and nail to the Covenanters. Do you know of any books beyond the common ones? If so, pray tell me next time you write.

22nd April, 1852.—"Delta" has just come in. Many thanks. I have already read all the memoir, and am going over it again. It is very beautifully and tenderly written, with too much of nothing, and yet with everything one could wish in such a record. The estimate of his poetry and the account of his death are especially fine. He was really a lovely character, and I shall go with double zest to a re-reading of his poetry and to renewed criticism on his works and character. The article will probably appear in the *Critic* for the 15th of May.

I have no news. I was sad at seeing Wilson's final retreat. I suppose his next step will be into his grave.

The "Covenanters" go on as fast as possible amid my other multifarious duties. I have got another month for writing them in. . . .

*4th June, 1852.*—The "Covenanters" go on. I am fighting Bothwell over again, just now. I think you will like my Magus Muir. I have craved another month to finish, but it must be ready by the end of August.

Of Nichol's sincere and warm friendship for me I never had the slightest doubt. I only feared, from the tone of his letter, that he had imbibed at second hand some erroneous impressions. I am glad to believe now that I was mistaken. He is a man whom I love, and whose friendship, next to your own, is the most valued on my list.

*8th November, 1852.*—I have no time for a letter. My book [Martyrs, Heroes and Bards of the Scottish Covenant] is out, is in its second thousand, and I can't comprehend what the fellows mean by not having sent copies to Dumfries. The Secretary has been very ill, which may account for it. I have written off to him on the subject, and directed him to send you a copy. I am getting hitherto nothing but golden opinions about it as my best, &c. You will judge for yourself.

There is a talk of a new edition of the British Poets to which I am to supply prefaces. It is not yet fixed however.

My congregation is at present, thank God! most flourishing. They have raised my stipend three successive years.

*3rd February, 1853.*—I have been troubled a good deal with cold, and not so strong this winter, and long for spring. Yet I never have been nearly so busy. I have edited (in charity) lately, two works, one of a deceased minister, the other of a poor poet—Nevay of Forfar, both of which are in the press; and, besides periodical work, &c., am now deep in Milton. Nichol is a brother of the Professor's, and seems a pushing fellow. He is to give me £150 a-year for the thing, and more if it prospers. It will involve a good deal of mechanical drudgery, but not more than I hope to manage. You will see fuller particulars soon.

I was in England in November. *Hogg* gives all the particulars. Bailey is a true, genuine man. By the way he likes those of your poems he has seen vastly, but desiderates a complete copy. Could you send him one? He would take it very kind.

I go to Hull next week. I won't be more than four days away, but grudge the time terribly. It is to introduce a young man from your district, called Rome, to his congregation.

*16th May, 1853.*—I have little to say unless I were wearying you with details of my own drudgeries. I find editing these poets hard work. It is very delightful no doubt to re-read your old favourites, but how horrid to have to attend to every *if* and *and*,

every colon and comma, and after all to find from your publisher that you have neglected to notice this or that other small individuality of blunder. I have no objection to write prefaces; but that constant irksome attention to trifles bothers me sadly. There, I had fancied I had presented all John Milton as "one entire and perfect chrysolite," when in walks a note this morning from Nichol telling me that the Latin poems are not correctly given, and it turns out that two-thirds of the errors are those of some blundering booby in Edinburgh who has compared my corrected copy with a bad edition. I heartily wish that I had promised to do nothing but prefix prefaces. The scheme is promising to do well, however.

4th June, 1853.—Comrie is uncommonly glorious this season. I never saw the trees so very rich. My mother is pretty well considering her age, 82, and has all her faculties entire. I enjoyed myself much and so did Margaret, although, since returning, she is rather weakly.

I have sent a paper on De Quincey to the *Critic*. I like his volume hugely. The second is to consist of essays, and the third is to be the "Confessions."

I finished at Comrie a paper on Moore for the *Scottish Review*. I have taken a very different view of him from your friend. How many a clever man—think of Hutton for instance—knows no more of poetry than a porker knows of the structure of the starry scheme.

I hope Wight's scheme\* will prosper. De Quincey has promised him a paper. I have begun one on

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\* *Hogg's Instructor*, 3rd Series.



Burke for his first number, which promises well. Yendys is, I believe, to do something. By the way, he (Yendys) talks of being in Scotland in autumn. I trust you will meet him.

My visit to Irvine is deferred till August. I earnestly trust you will be able to meet me then and there. Robertson will give you due notice.

I must close. I have written two discourses, corrected a large proof of Thomson, and written this note since 10 o'clock. It is now nearly half-past 12, and I feel a little tired.

*P.S.*—Smith's book is about sold—2000 copies—and Bogue has graciously given him £50 more than the original sum which was £100. There has been no such successful poetical hit since the days of Moore, Byron, and Scott. He is at present in England looking about him. I hope the London coteries won't spoil him.

20th June, 1853.—I am going to introduce a new poet, one Bigg of Ulverston, in the *Critic*. He has not quite so much pure poetry as Smith, but a vast deal more culture, variety, and, I think, a deeper vein of thought.

I have just finished "My Novel." Burley, the early scenes in Fairfield's life, and Morgan, are capital; but L'Estrange is an absurdity from first to last; and poor Randal, rascal as he is, is over ill-used. I think L'Estrange the greater scoundrel of the two. It is as a whole vastly inferior to the "Caxtons." Your J. W. E. is a spirited chap.

21st November, 1853.—Busy as usual. I have written five papers since I returned from Glasgow. I have done besides, what I think you'll like, begun again working steadily one day a-week at a large work which I commenced two years ago on "Christianity and our Era." I have also thoughts of copying out on the Sabbath evenings some of my best sermons and making a volume of them. You advised me to this long ago.

18th January, 1854—"Balder" is a wonderful book, but will not be popular, indeed seems written in utter defiance of popular taste. A. Smith goes further than us, and thinks it a total failure. I am sorry if it should fail, since it protracts the time when fame was to form the pedestal whence the author was to preach Christianity to the young age. I have reviewed it in *Hogg*, and advised him to write prose or an epic. I don't think his genius dramatic. But what can be grander than "Chamouni"? It resembles some of your own very best passages, and is ruggedly, savagely, terribly sublime. He has not yet appeared here, but comes by-and-by. A friend of mine has met him in Edinburgh, and is quite charmed with his manners.

11th February, 1854.—Goldsmith, Collins, and T. Warton are out. I am busy with Cowper's life. 'Tis the most tragic tale in the world's broad page. I felt positively relieved when I came to the close and got him fairly under the turf. I wonder at nothing so much as his constitution. Seventy years of torment!

What an idea, a man getting fat amid the flames of hell! Cowper all his life was healthy, often strong. I admire his genius, too, more and more every time I read him; it was so simple, strong, rich, and above all so healthy, considering his morbid constitution and horrid delusions.

You would rejoice to learn of A. Smith's success. Your friend William Macfarlane was of much service to him in his canvass [for the Secretaryship].

10th April, 1854.—And so the old lion has gasped his last! How grieved would all of us have been, had not his soul gone away first! And still at best it is a sad and solemn dispensation.

I liked your remarks on him exceedingly, with a slight exception or two. The *Critic* folks wrote me in great urgency for a paper on him, and I wrote with great rapidity a rather lengthy memoir for their first number. You will find that I have quoted the most of your paper, and contested one point or so. I have not at all repeated myself in it.

I wonder what really his religious views latterly were. It was impossible for such a clear and powerful mind as his to rest satisfied with the miserable pantheisms and Nature-worships of this drivelling day; but what his views of Christianity were seems very uncertain.

Well! his uncertainties are now past, and I trust in God's light he now sees light clearly. Next to Shakespeare, and perhaps Burns, he was the greatest genius in point of width and natural force this earth has ever seen. Peace, peace to his noble dust!

You will be grieved to hear that my good old mother is very poorly. She is now entirely confined to bed, and her toe, which has long troubled her, is showing symptoms of mortification. God bless her! She is the best-conditioned being I ever knew. I never saw her angry. Her piety is the very breath of her being. Her faculties—not much cultivated except by much religious reading—are naturally of a superior order, and are still entire. How I valued her weekly letters, so sensible and pious and motherly, now ceased for ever. I look forward with a most gloomy and desolate feeling to her departure. I intend going next week and seeing her, it may be for the last time.

After this I have little heart for news, and little to tell. Hogg has sent me this moment a volume containing both my "Galleries" in one, very handsome. I shall order him to send you a copy. He wishes me to collect a number of my papers into a third volume. I have a request to do the same by an American house, who will pay me a sum for it, if I prefix a preface. The thing is being negotiated. I have various other offers of work from London publishers.

Have you read Whewell's "Plurality of Worlds"? He has taken up a view I threw out in my "First Gallery" (I don't think, to be sure, he ever saw or heard of it), and based it on scientific arguments. I have reviewed it at great length for the *Eclectic*. It is a most interesting work, and so true.

25th April, 1854.—We found my mother calmly sinking to her rest, quite sensible and full of her



old kindness, sagacity, and even, at times, quiet humour. There is no hope of her recovery, but she was lingering on yesterday as late as one, afternoon, and there was no immediate prospect of a change. We bade her what shall probably be a last farewell on Friday amidst very solemn circumstances. The scene was affecting in the extreme. All her family have been seeing her. I felt as I left Comrie a feeling of loathing for everything I usually love, for literature, fame, nature, for all but the grand realities amidst which my mother was entering, and a wish that I might retain the sentiment for ever.

I have not much heart after this to enter at large on the subjects you start. "Butler" is heavy, but we shall have more notes than usual, and certainly Chaucer, Spenser, Surrey, &c., to whom you seem to refer, would have been heavier far with their old words and spelling. Our edition must be complete, and is already so successful that it can stand a single or even double failure. Next year we shall open with a copyright edition of "Bowles," which Nichol has purchased (with notes, &c.) from A. A. Watts.

You don't like my anti-Popery spirit? Did you ever read Milton's little tractate of "True Religion," published two years ere his death? What an eagle eye he darts there into the very marrow of the evil—the gigantic curse of Christendom; and how intensely his hatred to it burns! Two centuries have only confirmed the oracular truth of his pamphlets. Protestants have stultified themselves sadly by admitting Popery to be a form of Christianity.

By the way, Bulwer has written me a very flattering note about my paper on him, addressed to the "Author

of the Paper." It would raise him in your estimation, I mean the spirit it displays.

10th May, 1854.—My poor dear mother is at length at rest. She died on Monday night at half-past-ten. Her latter end was peace. She had been for some days comatose and only conscious at intervals. It is an awful thing to have your last link to all past generations cut off. Yet I rejoice with a deep and solemn joy, as I think she has now joined her sainted husband after twenty-eight years' separation, and is happy with him and her Saviour. Now I can use the words I have often quoted :

" Higher far my proud pretensions rise,  
The son of parents passed into the skies."

I leave to-morrow for the funeral. I rely on your kind sympathies and prayers.

23rd May, 1854.—I have been at Newtyle to-day seeing Mr. Muir, and find your kind letter waiting me. I thank you for all your affectionate sympathies and sayings. I have been obliged to *look away* from my mother's funeral and memory altogether since my return, and have been working harder than ever to drown or deaden sorrow. There is nothing for it but that. And yet, think of turning from that Grampian grave of peace, purity, and love, to correct "*Hudibras*"—that cold sneer of 500 pages in length.

7th August, 1854.—I don't think I am due you a letter, but feel a sort of impulse to write you. I am

sorry you can't come this season. What a pity you don't see our scenery in its present exuberance of glory! I never saw crops like those in this neighbourhood; and although you seem to have had wet weather, we have had three weeks of the finest imaginable.

I am still terribly pestered with poets, good and bad, male and female, quick and dead. I returned within the last two months sixteen collections of MS. poetry, some of them in folio, others as thick as pulpit Bibles; and more are pouring in. The worst is, much in them is tolerably good, and yet, as a whole, the thing is out of the question. I have not the heart to cut them up.

31st October, 1854.—[In Edinburgh] I called with Hogg on poor old De Quincey who is at present residing there. He is in wonderful preservation, and talks away in his usual distinct and deliberate style. I go over again next month and intend spending a night with him. [Conversation usually went on till 3 A.M.] He has annexed to his forthcoming edition of "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts," a note giving an account of the murders perpetrated by Williams in 1812, in the most powerful style of description I ever read, for clear, distinct enunciation of particulars, added to a general ghastly result of horror. Of course, this was written the other day, and shows that at seventy-four his powers are as strong or stronger than ever. Wilson's death seems to have touched him deeply. Your favourite, "The Revolt of the Tartars," is also to appear in the new volume.

Mrs. Gilfillan is at present well. We have had flocks of bairns from the north—but they have all now crept home, poor, dear lambs! to their winter folds.

I am busy writing on old George Buchanan for the *Scottish Review*. This has compelled me to refurbish my Latin, in looking into his psalms, plays, and so forth. He was really a good old fellow.

I have heard nothing of Yendys nor much of Smith recently. Bigg has been cut up, I hear, in the *Athenæum*, and is now another on the beastly bead-roll of unfairness. He lives at present with his father, a Wesleyan clergyman, at Ulverston. All I have heard of him impresses me with great respect for him as a man, as well as a poet. It is disgraceful to find a poet, distinguished above all these young authors by his Christian feeling, accused of profanity and blasphemy.

You say nothing of the projected publication of your own poetry.

29th January, 1855.—I am glad to get a letter written in such good spirits from you, and to learn that your powers of locomotion are returned. A crippled bee or bird is but an emblem of a walking poet rheumatised.

You are mistaken about my not liking winter. I long ago did not; but, for some years have enjoyed it, on the whole, better than summer or any of the seasons except autumn. But, our autumns are now so haunted with the demon of cholera that much of their pleasure is gone.

Peter Bayne is a Free Church student, a manly



promising fellow who has done good service in his book against Carlylism. He is a man of talent, fancy, immense industry, and culture, as you will see in his volume. I anticipate much from him in this apologetic vein which he has opened.

I was sure you would revel in Rogers. He rarely attains to the highest eloquence in poetry; but for light yet linked logic, wit, and masterly ease, has no superior.

I have been and am busy with Dryden. His plays are unbelievably abominable, and so are many of his prologues, which, alas! we must give. But the descriptions in "Palamon and Arcite," and the "Flower and the Leaf," were they entirely his own, would stamp him one of the greatest of poets. I never had read the "Flower and the Leaf" before, and seldom read anything with such delight. Its purity as compared to Dryden's other poems is wonderful, although for that he is indebted to his master. And what a fine romantic aroma breathes from it all!

I owe that increased ease you speak of greatly to the diligent and careful reading of Burke. I spend an hour every Saturday evening in reading a portion of his works. He is undoubtedly the greatest prose writer, as a whole, in the language. You will find, I think, when you read my "Christianity and our Era," as well as that other book which shall as yet be nameless, an advance in point of ease above the "Third Gallery."

I rejoice sincerely in Tulloch's success; nor do I wonder at it, for he has a rare power of self-culture and perseverance added to excellent talents, and, under a somewhat careless exterior, has, I believe, a

good genial heart. You put him, however, rather high the other day, when you named him beside Rogers.

There will be by-and-by a terrible front of apologies for Christianity meeting the Sceptic. And high time it is! The young mind of the age is literally mad on this subject. But in Bayne's book I see the first wave of a reaction. Carlyle has a dreadful responsibility on his head. I would sooner be under the load of Atlas.

20th April, 1855.—I am nearly through with my task of that Imaginary Biography I wrote you about, and I have written 200 large pages of my "Christianity and our Era." I read a large part of the autobiography to young Gorrie, who thinks it by far my *raciest* and most interesting book. It contains descriptions of scenery, conversations with celebrated men (imaginary of course), incidents, poetry, sketches of character; and I have closed it with a history of my religious opinions, which will contain some strong hits at sceptical leaders. I think you will like the book as a whole.

"Christianity and our Era," is about half written. It is more elaborate than the other, but not so easy. I hope, in God, it may do some good to these distracted and devil-ridden times. The longer I live I am the more thoroughly persuaded of the truth of our blessed faith, and more anxious to do some little thing in its defence. Oh that I had as much of the spirit and grace of Christianity as I have firmness of conviction in its truth!

*6th October, 1855.*—I have yours this moment. Thanks for your critical strictures. Only, if you look again to that sentence, you will find that I was enumerating, not Churchill's intellectual qualities, but the elements of which his poetry was composed. And, certainly, passion and hatred were among the principal. You are, I think wrong, too, in thinking passion to include, in popular parlance, hatred. By passions, in a loose and grand way, we mean, love, anger, &c., the violent feelings, not the cool and concentrated like hatred. Nichol seldom praises ; but he has warmly commended my Churchill.

I was in Edinburgh this week arranging with Nichol next year's editions. We are to have Burns, two volumes and a-half, and a half volume of his minor contemporaries—Macneill, A. Wilson, &c., two volumes of Pope, and a volume of Border and other Ballads.

*13th October, 1855.*—Thanks for your new suggestions, which I shall bear in view. I knew, of course, that you did not mean that my pen should remain idle until I had completed the redaction of former doings. This winter, now that the "History of a Man" is nearly finished, I intend, all but entirely, to devote to "Christianity and our Era," which I intend first very carefully to write out, and then to re-write, so that I cannot expect to be through with it for eighteen months. I find occasional writing for periodicals a relief to the severe thought of the other, and so has the writing of the "History" acted. I have written it with more pleasure and ease than anything in my life.

I intend to go to London in first week of November. Mrs. Gilfillan goes so far, to her brother's in Bucks. I go to Bristol from London, and thence to Belfast. I shall be nearly three weeks away. I hope to see Croly, and perhaps also Hunt and Bulwer and some others in London.

I have been worked to death lately with preaching evening and other sermons,—have had cold, too, and hope to be all the better of a trip. I take a run to Comrie the week after next.

I hope your poems will soon see the light in a worthy form. Let me hear about the probable time, &c., ere I start, which I do on 5th of November.

23rd November, 1855.—I am newly home, and find my table literally littered with books, letters, &c., waiting for my attention. I must drop you a note, however, merely to say that Hall, Virtue, and Co. jump at the publication of the "History of a Man," only would like my name to it, in which point, however, I won't agree with them. The matter will now go on *quam primum*.

I enjoyed my Bristolians much, and found my works, &c., better known than in Dundee. This, of course, proves their sense!

I saw Croly for nearly two hours. The old boy is in famous preservation. I got more from him, I think, than on any former occasion. He was asking, as always, most kindly for you.

Bulwer invited me, per note, to visit him at Knebworth, but I could not comply. Other literary men, except good Dr. Price, saw I and sought I none. . . .

How glad I am to be at home. I have not had



much work when away, and find quantities of it waiting here; but I have been terribly knocked about with railway travelling, change of beds, &c., and am anxious for rest. I had a glorious peep of the outskirts of the Lake Country under a superb sunset last evening on my way to Carlisle. How I longed to have fled over and through them, and popped down on Dumfries.

26th February, 1856.—I am glad that you design us an early visit. Come, if you can, in May, with the May flowers.

I got on flamingly, at least better than ever before in Edinburgh: but oh! lecturing is a small miserable business. I am dragged into it ever and anon by fellows from London, Edinburgh or Glasgow, who pop in, post haste, and say they have travelled express to secure you. It is difficult resisting such "soft impeachments." You can say *No* in letters easily enough, but not to moustached messengers steaming from railways.

The "History" goes on. It is now two-thirds printed. You were lucky in your "reader." Mine is a cockney of the lowest (Thames) water, who queries such an expression as "numerous prose," &c.

Nichol forwarded me three very gratifying notes anent the poets from Brougham, Bulwer, and Croly, to all of whom he had sent complete sets. All speak in the highest terms of the edition, and Brougham promises to look over it critically and send any suggestions. Croly closes his long letter with a fearful philippic at the "Lake and the New Poets." He says they are the "Puseyism of poetry." It is a remarkably clever letter, but one-sided.

*7th April, 1856.*—Many thanks for your kind strictures. I had intended closing the book much in the way you speak of, but was hurried in the time of writing the last chapter. I may, in case of another edition, do what you say, and add another chapter or two. Aytoun richly deserves all I say of him. A more heartless dog does not exist; and his power is entirely mimetic, although I concede "Montrose" to be nearly all you say. After you have read the book carefully, tell me at once what you like best and worst. I like best all in the first chapter about my father, Campbell's and Wilson's talk, the chapter on Religious Progress and the Dream of Judgment. I never had so much pleasure in writing anything, except my "First Gallery" as the "Man." I am now at sterner work—combating Maurice in "Christianity and our Era."

*16th January, 1857.*—Since I wrote you last I have got Virtue's account. He has sold 700 of the "Man," and there are still 300 on hand. Of course the thing has thus paid, and will ultimately bring in some £20 or £25. I was rather disappointed at first, but on reflection, considering the unprecedented and unscrupulous abuse of the book by various hands, and the non-adaptation of much in it to the English market, am now tolerably satisfied.

Mrs. Samuel Brown wrote me last week for letters. I spent three hours yesterday searching for them, but could only find three or four at all fit for publication.

You remember Scott's account of his feelings in reading old letters in his diary. It is the most painfully pleasurable of all avocations, the true joy of

grief, or grief of joy and mercy, made me weep like a child yesterday. What stings, both of gladness and of regret, leap up to your heart from those old quivers of past existence! In one point I think Scott wrong. He speaks of letters that once made you throb and thrill, as having become dead. I feel on the contrary that if dead they undergo an instant and miraculous resurrection. In lifting them up, you lift up with them all the associations and feelings which they excited in bygone time. To me at least every emotion, however small, of joy or sorrow, pride or shame, returns entire, as well as every accessory incident of the period. But then Scott was looking back along a much longer, and far more thickly crowded vista when he wrote that memorable passage.

*19th January, 1857.*—Since I wrote you, indeed with your kind note of this morning, has come in Brown's little book. It is a reprint of a life of his father, and seems to contain a good deal of religious and gratifying matter. It has been printed for private circulation. If you get no copy of it let me know, and I'll send you a reading of this copy. Mrs. Gilfillan had signified a wish to know something of Samuel's state of mind, and Mrs. Brown has replied with this volume.

Don't be afraid of my over-working myself. These papers for periodicals cost me little labour, and I write my more elaborate things at intervals. My plan of life is arranged with almost geographical minuteness. I rise at nine, go into the shower-bath, breakfast, and read, set to work at half-past ten, stop

at one, dine, go out and visit or walk till five, take tea, write till nine, sup, read, and am in bed always by eleven. My only regular beverages are tea and malt liquor, chiefly table beer. Alcohol, in the shape of whisky, I often do not taste for months, and I find like you, that the less I take the better. I sleep eight or nine hours, and have not had a headache for years. In fine, I never was stronger or better, thank God ! in my life, and am always best when working most constantly.

23rd March, 1857.—I am newly home from St. Andrews, where I had gone yesterday evening to preach a public sermon, and find your note, which though short is welcome.

The writer of the paper on Samuel Brown was Dr. John Brown, his cousin. It is a fine paper. Thinking with you, however, that something more might be said, the spirit moved me to indite a rather lengthy and genial paper on our poor, dear friend, for *Titan*, which will appear, I presume, in May. I hope it will gratify his wife and other friends. Its writing was a fearfully pleasing task, one of those pleasures vibrating between joy and torment, like honey dashed with gall. Of his book I hear nothing further. My own is within one chapter and a-half of being all corrected.

I wish you had seen St. Andrews Bay this morning ! What mighty billows bearing their foam like the morning on their crests, and surging and seething at such a rate !

P.S.—I sent a little paper on "Burke, as a Historian," for your forthcoming annual, which I hope reached you.



7th April, 1857.—Thanks for your friendly note anent “Christianity and Our Era,” the first I have received, although I have one or two oral opinions quite as favourable before. I don’t think you will at the close of your perusal prefer any chapter for calmness and completeness to those in the “Evidences” and “Scepticism,” which are at least more immaculate than any of the rest. In the two last in the volume, I have given imagination full swing, and these with young people and young poets are likely to be favourites. The two you expect most from are the best intellectually, but are likely to be most disputed.

I don’t know whether you will admit the characteristic in this new work that I think I see to be its peculiarity as compared to the “Bards”—namely, continuous and incessant thinking, in all the better and more laboured passages at least. There are more thoughts in one or two of its pages than in chapters of the “Bards.” *Valeat quantum valere potest*; and if God give it two or three “Sceptre Souls” for its hire, it shall not have been written in vain.

You like Part II. of “Scott.” I am truly glad of this, for I had made up my mind that it was the best thing I had written for Nichol for three years, and shall henceforth confide somewhat in my own comparative awards.

26th May, 1857.—I suppose the book is doing well. I have seen nearly a dozen notices, all more or less friendly, and have letters from Croly, Dr. Anster, John Cairns, Begg, and Young of the “Christian Life,”

all very kind. I was particularly pleased with Cairns' note. He differs decidedly from the millenarian view, but otherwise is very favourable, and, I have some notion, may review it in the *United Presbyterian Magazine*.

I am happy to hear that in this mechanical age so many of your poems have gone off, and shall hail the "Old Bachelor," who, I trust, will come forth with additions to his wallet.

I like the *Album*\* on the whole very well indeed. Your "Recreations" are very fine, although all from the *Herald*, I see. Carlyle is quaint as usual and sardonically earnest, although he need not try to pass off for another person, least of all for a Yankee doctor.

I am glad you saw Alexander Smith, who is a fine, unpretending, anti-humbug fellow. Dobell's manners are more ornate and elaborate; but he is at bottom a kind-hearted and generous being.

I am sorry Samuel's affair is delayed. The ancient prestige of prejudice seems to fight with his very dust, as I argue also from Hogg's reluctance to publish my tribute. [See next letter.]

I have been rather fallowing for some time, always writing a little, but more slowly than usual. I have a paper in, I believe, the July *Titan* on Miller's "Rocks," and have written one for some future number on Boswell's queer "Letters." I am at present dissecting "Edinburgh Dissected" for the *Critic*. It is a curious and readable olla podrida, that book, by the way.

Akenside is our next poet. I believe your friend

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\* *Dumfries Album*, containing Carlyle on the Opera; Gilfillan on Burke; Contributions by Professor Blackie, Ebsworth, &c.

Dr. Brown had offered to give Nichol his life. This, of course, the plan of our publication forbids. But if he could give us a short estimate of him as a physician, a sort of abridgment of what he intended to have done, I would gladly insert it at the close of my life and criticism as *his*. Pray tell him of this. It must, however, be brief, as the book will be rather corpulent than otherwise.

27th August, 1857.—The *Scottish Review* is to publish Samuel Brown, else I was to have sent it you. I think you will like it. It appears in October.

I don't comprehend young Hogg. He asked me to write on "Boswell," and accepted the paper at once, and yet has not sent me a proof. He is ruining *Titan*. That last number is a piece of soap-suddism from beginning to end. He takes no advice, and is wrapt up in his own self-sufficiency. I am very much disposed to cut him.

I go north for a week on Saturday with Mrs. Gilfillan.

I am busy chiefly with my people and the Poets. Dr. Rogers wrote me a good, manly, kindly note anent "Christianity."

24th October, 1857.—I have been at Comrie this week. It is looking exquisitely lovely, having wrapt its richest robe around it ere it falls into winter. What fine dappling of light and shade! What rich bronze of withered fern on the hills! What a glorious chaos along the sides of the Lednock, of grey rocks, blue and bickering streams, yellow ashes, and ever-

green pines! And how preternaturally distinct come out the Grampians in the October light. Stuicknachroan and Ben Voirlich looked unearthly near and unearthly distinct and lofty.

I wrote "Quarles" at Comrie, and am busy with Crashaw. Thank God they were not scientific. Crashaw is truly a divine poet, a Christian Shelley. Quarles, too, is admirable.

4th November, 1857.—I had a pleasant little trip to Edinburgh, going on Monday and returning yesterday.

I saw A. Smith in his office. He is well, and defying the *Athenæum* and all its works. I advised him to send you a copy of his City Poems, which, I think, he means to do. Sydney Yendys is away to the Continent in bad health. Smith has a prose work, a half-novel, *in petto*.

I met Dr. Begg, who insisted on showing me Hogg's new place which I was in quest of; and while walking along we met Dr. Guthrie, to whom Begg introduced me. He is a queer-looking, snuffy, cordial man. I had never spoken to him before. He is just "mine host of the candlestick" in Waverley, so far as appearance goes.

19th November, 1857.—I take a run to Liverpool to lecture next week. 'Tis a sad bore; but I was bothered and badgered into it. I won't be over two nights away. My subject is "The Comparative Influence of Paganism, Modern Infidelity, and Christianity on Literature." It is almost entirely a new lecture, and I hope will serve me in that capacity for a



while. I can't, with all my efforts, entirely get rid of lecturing.

20th April, 1858.—I am glad your "Delta" has done so well; only, remember that cheap editions are thorough failures in point of remuneration. Hogg has found so to his cost, in my cheap "Galleries," although the fourth edition of the Bards has sold well, and "Christianity and our Era" is nearly exhausted. He tells me that scarcely any cheap edition pays unless sold in enormous quantities.

Our church reopened on Sabbath with great *éclat*. It was the Sacrament Sabbath, and this, along with the novelty, secured us not only crowds all three times, but excellent collections. It is a perfect gem—the finest now, they say, in Dundee. You would not know it, everything is so handsome, light, chaste, and gay—if you can apply such a word to a church. The whole cost was £350. I trust that it will inaugurate a new era of spiritual and mental improvement with us.

1st July, 1858.—Burleigh is a singular fellow. His prose is manly and good, his correspondence exceedingly vigorous and *uniform*, while his verse is most unequal and, as you say, provoking. Still, he has the real stuff in him; and to poetic "faith" has added learned "virtue." I have noticed his satire pretty fully in last *Critic*. I am doing Prior for Nichol. It is, on the whole, dreary work. "Alma" is nearly unreadable. "Solomon" is cumbrous, but has admirable passages. I am now working at Prior's Life.

2nd August, 1858.—I am busy, as usual. I have a paper in this *Titan* which I think you will like, and two, I expect, in next *Scottish Review*. I am working gradually at the sermons, and am doing now and then a little at a new production entitled "Life in Letters"—which means a life told in the form of letters—not unlike the "Man," but in a different style, and not restricting myself to my own life at all. I do not yet see my way clearly through it, but like it pretty well, so far as gone.

I have written Hall and Virtue about a new edition of the "Man," but have not got their reply. Burghley's poems are beginning to get on. I am going to write a notice of them for the *Morning Chronicle*.

22nd September, 1858.—I am just home from a short run into Ayrshire. I was assisting a clergyman in Kilmarnock, and, having Saturday at my own disposal, I went to see W. Robertson at Irvine. He is well, happy, dwelling in a most beautiful house furnished in the Grecian taste, adored by his people, and amusing his leisure by writing verses, chiefly religious. He read me some of them, which seemed exceedingly fine—especially one entitled "The Dream of the Foolish Virgin," and another, "Rachel by the Well." He is, certainly, a wondrous little fellow. He gave me some affecting particulars of his last interview with Samuel Brown—an interview in which there were as many tears as words. I glanced over, at Irvine, the first volume of Brown's remains. It is imperfect and, in parts, obscure, but interesting to all who knew him.

I spent Saturday with Robertson, preached in the forenoon of Sabbath for him, and got a drive into Kilmarnock, where I had work for afternoon and evening. It was a heavenly day, and the country, although not romantic, is beautiful, a succession of wood-covered knolls and level fields, over which, from the far south-east, looked in the blue, abrupt peak of Loudon Hill, with all its Drumclog memories. I preached to nearly 2000 people in the evening. I returned *viâ* Glasgow on Monday, having enjoyed my trip exceedingly.

There is a worthy, sturdy fellow in Kilmarnock, named David Jamieson, an old college chum of mine—a minister of ours now—who is bringing out, at fifty, his first poem. He means, I think, to send you a copy. It has many good lines, and a genial, juvenile spirit. If you can say a good word for it, he will be quite a proud and happy man.

I am busy with the Poets. There are to be four in our December volume—Penrose, Green, Dyer, and Armstrong. This will give me work for three weeks or so. Wyatt is off my hands, and appears in October. Nichol speaks a little despondingly about the sale, and thinks of closing in three years. He had an enormous subscription list—but the public are a fickle generation, and the thing is so cheap that nothing but a very large sale will pay. When it stops it will be a material deduction from my income; but something else may turn up.

2nd October, 1858.—I hasten to transmit my deep sympathy with you in your alarming accident. God be thanked for your preservation. I trust you will

steadily recover, and are awaiting your restoration with patience. What a daily miracle our life is.

Jamieson writes me to-day quite delighted with your note. He is a good fellow, and although his book may not live long, its success—and it is doing well—will cheer him.

Dickens was here “reading” last night. I did not go; but Mr. Cay having kindly presented my wife with a ticket, she went, and was rather pleased. I believe he does the small, self-degrading thing well.

*22nd November, 1858.*—I was grieved to see in the papers a notice of your worthy father’s death, grieved for you, not for him, for he had become a shock of corn fully ripe, and all his purposes on earth were served. You have been privileged in having had him so long. I lost my father when he was in full vigour, and when I was a mere boy. There is something, however, always very solemn and saddening, in the death of one so near, and to whom we owe so much, and, I doubt not, you grudge the grave even that hoary head.

I saw James on his way home from the funeral. He told me you were now nearly well. What a mercy the death had not occurred while you were prostrated!

I have no news that can interest you. I have received the second volume of Carlyle’s *Magnum*. It is, in parts, tediously minute, but contains some very picturesque matter. I would not, however, class it in power with the “*French Revolution*,” but this is partly owing to inferior interest in the subject.



29th November, 1858.—I had yours on Saturday, and am glad you are resigned to the dispensation that has come upon you. It is sad—the thought of leaving old Bowden for ever.

My “History of a Man,” like your “Delta,” is not fully sold out. There are still 200 on hand, and so a second edition is indefinitely postponed. These are bad times for book writers.

Nichol is to close his series, so far as the old Poets are concerned, in two years. Then are to come the modern, such as Byron, Moore, &c., which will spin it out for two or three years further.

I have some thoughts of publishing the first of my intended volumes of “Alpha and Omega”—the consecutive sermons I spoke of—some time next year. Do you like the thought of publishing one of them before the other?

I am preaching and periodicalising briskly. These pay better than publishing separate volumes, else I were long ago tired of the second! I have been doing Carlyle’s “Frederick” for the *Scottish Review*; “Thorndale; or, The Conflict of Opinions,” for *Titan*, and some smaller matters for the *Critic*, &c.

Are you to take any part in the Burns affair? I was invited both to Glasgow and the Banks of Doon, but declined both. I see no use for it, except the opportunity it gives of infinite blether of speechification. Could we telegraph to Hades and tell the *Shade* about it, it were a different story.

I expect Ebsworth in February. Our “Watt” promises well this year. Dodds of London leads off on the “Covenanters” to-night—and then comes Charles Mackay. I hope Ebsworth will have good audiences.

10th December, 1858.—Alas ! since I wrote, Death has visited our little circle here as well as yours. A cousin of Mrs. Gilfillan's, a youth of twenty-nine, John Gordon by name, has died after a fortnight's illness. He was a most amiable and excellent young man, and is deeply regretted, and by none more than me. He was for several years my kind companion, *Fidus Achates*, in my little Highland tours. I allude to him, both in "Glencoe" and in "Loch Awe." Since Agnes Vallentine died, no death has so much impressed me. He was a corn-merchant to trade, and his brother is married to my niece. My wife is exceedingly grieved too, and was very ill for some hours after his death, but is now better.

"What nothings we are, and what nothings we pursue."

27th December, 1858.—I cordially reciprocate good New Year and Christmas wishes. How rapidly these milestones are passing us as we move onwards ! And now the *Terminus* continues to get darker and more mysterious the nearer we approach it. Surely the gloom, gathering around the gate of death to its deepest, is an assurance that as in the natural world there is a dawning beyond.

Thanks for your hints as to publication. I fear Nichol won't be fond of detaching my papers from the volumes, else I should be ready to act on your idea, being convinced they would form, not my best, but my most popular work. Of course, they are his, the copyright being expressly reserved for him, and their publication in a separate form might injure the sale of the volumes. It is not the same as when

articles are reprinted from a periodical. I was almost frightened during a sleepless hour the other night to calculate that they amount already to forty-three lives—Johnson's were fifty-two.

Spenser is our next poet—glorious, but lazy and tedious—as too large and brimming a cup of nectar might be in the drinking. I intend three papers in the course of the five volumes—1st, an essay explaining the Allegory ; 2nd, a life ; and 3rd, a paper on his genius. I have got “Todd,” and various other helps, including Wilson's noble papers.

P.S.—MacGill, now our Home Secretary [U.P. Church], was here last week. He is the old mildly intellectual and true fellow. We were recalling all about our jaunt with you to Glamis. We went out and spent a night with John Muir at Newtyle.

11th February, 1859.—Your friend Ebsworth has been with us. He is full of nice, fluent, discriminatory, though somewhat dim and divisive talk. His lecture was infinitely too good and subtle for his audience — specially his individual portraiture of plays, which I thought the best I had ever heard. His broader pictures of play-life, &c., were more effective, but not nearly so good.

A wretched faction, who are fearfully annoyed at the success of my Burns oration here, and hence at me, are also, I hear, abusing him for no other reason but that he has come out under (save the mark !) my special patronage. No matter. I trust his next lecture will be a triumph.

I have been reading Masson's “Milton.” Very

able and researching ; a massive structure, but cold and "uncrowned with Deity." More of it in the *Scottish Review*.

4th April, 1859.—I took a little tour a fortnight ago to Huntly, Keith, and Banff, at all which places I lectured. I enjoyed my Banff audience much. It was large and intelligent. Banff is a beautiful place, situated in a nook up which the ocean thrusts its narrow, foamy tongue with great boldness. By the way, I was nearly killed at the Bridge. A young man, named Sellar, was driving me in a gig from Turriff to Banff. On emerging from some woodland, and rounding the corner of the bridge, which is rather awkward, a strong blast blowing down the river struck us, and down went horse, gig, and all. We were hurled with some violence on the road, but escaped with a few contusions and torn trousers. Had the horse been one yard farther on we would have been hurled over the parapet, and so—farewell Apollodorus. But it was more mercifully ordered, and three hours afterwards I was in the lecture-room. I had the most gloomy and certain presentiment of some calamity all the way from Dundee previously.

30th May, 1859.—I send you by Burghley's desire a copy of his new pamphlet. Do notice it. I may be mistaken, but I think it is a right manly and eloquent thing, almost worthy of the days when Johnson and Burke used to write pamphlets. Mark the closing chapter especially, and the singularly clever preface. Try to interest Hannay in Burghley. Depend on it, "we'll a' be proud o' Robin yet."



13th June, 1859.—Burghley has not yet learned to write easily, but I think his earnestness his great quality. He is terribly, prophetically sincere, and hence his utterance is sometimes choked in its own fury. Carlyle has written him a letter, which I have seen, of (for Carlyle) very warm encouragement.

We were at Comrie last week. It is looking glorious. The foliage is exceedingly rich, although I have seen the mountains better clothed with grass and ferns at this season. I had a dip or two in old Earn, and enjoyed it amazingly.

I have been doing "Jerrold" for *Titan*, "Novels and Novel-writers" for *Scottish Review*, and various other things. "Scripture Studies" are also progressing. I have got as far as the deaths of Aaron and Moses, both great themes; nor has Ruskin, I think, exhausted them.

What weather! so splendid, but tantalising. At Comrie everything is burnt up, but now and then the ground was moistened by a golden mist, which reminded me of the "smoke from the glory of God" in the Revelation. The most heavenly ride I almost ever had was on Tuesday on the coach from Crieff to Comrie, through a six-mile avenue of lofty trees, and with Ochertyre, Lawers and other country seats peeping through the foliage. And what a glare there was in the dying eye of the sun!

3rd September, 1859.—Along with your note Story's book has entered. It was not I who did him in the *Critic*. I shall carefully read his volume and write him. He seems a modest and deserving man.

I was at Bridge of Allan preaching the other day.

Johnston of "Freshfield" was there, and spoke to me. He is an amiable and interesting young man. His novel has a deal of lively and readable matter, but is too sketchy and desperately dramatic. He entirely fails in Havelock. I like Turley best. In Dickens' hands he would have been quite a ridiculous gem.

I have read the "Idylls." You will see my mind on them at length in next *Scottish Review*. "Elaine" is a fine story, and the speech of the "much-enduring King" to his strumpet spouse is very edifying, and does not make you laugh but cry. I walk a medium course in my criticism, between Ebsworth who is daft about them, and Burghley who says there is only one good line in the whole. Burghley is getting savage, however, in his exclusiveness. I tell him that it is because he won't do justice to others that others don't do it to him, and he owns I am right, but that he cannot help it. There is a strange strength in him, but he is gnarled as well as strong.

Poor Hunt! you must have seen him to love him thoroughly. He has had a long tough battle with this weary world, but is now at rest. Croly is now alone. He and Hunt were ages.

This is glorious autumn weather. I don't tremble like you at the early stubble, provided the weather keeps up. Last night I had a delicious walk, half-way to Broughty-Ferry, and a dip in the sea, which was tide full. What Divine rays of light were fluttering in the west, blending with wind-swept clouds. I had the broad setting sun in my eyes while swimming, and returned to write by what is the sweetest of all sublunary lights, autumnal gas, save indeed autumnal fire, which to me is more beautiful than even the stars. And yet they were gorgeous last night, with the

Aurora, like the milky-way gone mad, careering through them.

*28th September, 1859.*—Mrs. Gilfillan and I left on Tuesday week for Hawick. On Wednesday we went with the Irvines to Newtown, Dryburgh, Melrose, Abbotsford, and landed at Selkirk where we stopt all night. I need not say how I enjoyed all this. The day was heavenly, and the scenery of the Tweed was worthy of its atmosphere. Dryburgh is certainly as sweet a spot of earth and

“As enchanted

As e'er beneath the rising moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon lover.”

How impressive to kneel and uncover before the magic dust of Scott. I was much struck with a gigantic yew which grew near, and might form a crown for the head of death. How beautiful your dear Eildons looked from the bank above the boat which crosses the river. One thing I regretted, not seeing your native Bowden. I had to shape it for myself reposing at the foot of the triple hill.

The next day we drove up to St. Mary's Loch and down by Ettrick. Every spot is poetry. Newark, Park's ruined cottage standing by the wayside, Dryhope, Mount Benger, Altrive, and Tibby's; Irvine and I found our way into Altrive, where old “Scottie” still lives, a hale man of ninety-three. He gave us capital milk and cheese, and showed us Hogg's study, and told us divers things about the shepherd, some of which I may use should I write an account of the jaunt. I prefer the Loch o' the Lowes

to St. Mary's. It seems more sweetly pastoral. St. Mary's was in wrath that day, big-bellied with the wind, an unusual case, and did not give its usual metaphor of peace. We crossed the hill to Tushielaw, and thence back to Selkirk, returning by train to Hawick.

Next day we drove to Minto House, through the rich valley of the Teviot, and came back by Denholm, where we saw the room of Leyden's birth, and by Cavers, where we looked in by twilight at the old church, now a school-room, where Chalmers preached and Leyden used to study.

On Saturday, leaving Mrs. Gilfillan at Hawick, I set off for Newcastle. I had a delightful glimpse of Kelso on the way. I found the route to Hexham exceedingly beautiful. I preached three times to large audiences, and started early on Monday, my heart heaving in the prospect of the lakes, but alas! in vain. I did not regret, however, going to Carlisle, as I saw the upper part of the Tyne valley, which is very lovely, and the city of Carlisle, which is cleanly, yet full of bustling life. . . .

*P.S.*—I heard at Selkirk of Nichol's death. Poor fellow—

“How fast doth brother follow brother,  
From sunshine to the sunless land.”

*22nd December, 1859.*—So soon as I have “Alpha” off hands, and have given these promised lectures at Galashiels, &c., my resolution holds to give up all lecturing, all small notices of books, all reading of author's MSS., and to devote myself, first, to the pulpit more strenuously than ever, secondly, to the



Poets, and thirdly, to a course of solid thought and study preparatory to another and perhaps final trial in the way of authorship a few years hence. I am tired of these thousand trifling lectures and palavers of all kinds. I lately lectured and preached eleven times in eight days.

Poor De Quincey, the little dead lion, is getting his kicks, I see, from the *Athenæum* and *Daily News*. I must defend him, one of these days, somewhere. A kinder creature, with all his faults, did not breathe.

16th January, 1860.—I start to-morrow for a brief border-raid. I lecture at Galashiels to-morrow, next evening at Melrose, and Thursday at Hawick, and return on Friday.

Nichol sent me forty-three volumes last week for the Specimens, a formidable assortment. I intend setting tooth-and-nail to it when I return, and making it, with the exception of my pulpit work, and a paper now and then in the *Scottish Review*, my sole avocation this season. It will possibly extend to three volumes.

21st January, 1860.—I cannot refrain from telling you how much I enjoyed the south. I had a most cordial reception at all the three places publicly, and in private was most hospitably entertained. I saw your old, honest friend Pringle, your sisters and mother, and the families of your two sisters. The weather was wintry, but clear and good, although, old Abbotsford looked bleak on Wednesday under the shadow of the frost-bound hills!

Whom should I meet in the train at Galashiels but my old friend William Tait? He is now, you are aware, a laird at Priorbank. He was very cordial. He talked in a feeling way of the loss of De Quincey, and particularly of Nichol and Ferguson of Kelso. He has lost Leigh Hunt, too. There is no small heart in Tait. He has not seen his magazine for years.

*12th March, 1860.*—“Alpha” is getting printed, and will appear in a month or so. Hogg writes cheerily of my “Bards,” which is about to go into a sixth edition. My hope of “Alpha” is founded on its resemblance to the “Bards.”

*11th July, 1860.*—I don’t know if I mentioned in any of my notes my intention of taking a continental trip this season. I have now fixed to start for Norway next Tuesday from Newcastle. My companion is to be James Gordon. We go by Hamburg and Copenhagen, and intend to be three or four weeks away. We shall, I fear, be too late for the midnight sun; but the sunsets are finer when he is beneath the wave, and the peaks and precipices are always the same.

*20th November, 1860.*—I long to hear from you, and shall therefore write, although I think you owe me a letter.

I am newly home from Edinburgh. My Norway lecture was received with downright enthusiasm. I had a large and yet select audience, and gave them eighty minutes of it.

I saw Blackie and Alexander Smith. Both are well. Smith is bringing out a new poem in spring. He seems reconciled to his secretary's post, and very snug and happy altogether.

I have just once heard from Ebsworth. I don't know how he takes to Cambridge.

Nichol is to delay the "Modern Poets," owing, he says, to difficulties about copyright. This snaps in the meantime a golden bough of £150 a-year to me. But it will give me more time for something else. I saw Hogg for a minute in the lecture room. He looks down in the mouth.

14th February, 1861.—It is as I expected some time past. The Crollys would willingly have me to write their father's life, but are afraid of their Church of Englandism being compromised. They speak, too, of want of materials. I don't know whether they are to have a life or no. They wrote Johnston, who forwarded to me the purport of what they said. So then be it. I was certainly desirous of the job; first, because I was out of one at present; and secondly, because I really loved and admired Croly, and wished to do my best for his memory.

20th April, 1861.—Saturday of the Sacrament though it be, I cannot but thank you for your manly and thoroughly true remarks in to-day's *Herald* on "Revivals." I wish every newspaper in the land were to copy these remarks so pat to the times. The Revivalists, of course, won't profit by them, but the public generally would. Between "Essays and

Reviews" on the one hand, and the rant and humbug of religionists on the other, things are in a sad pass, and both these extremes are strengthening each other, and cutting off middle ground as fast as they can.

I close my lecturing campaign for the season in Glasgow City Hall on Thursday. I have stood it admirably, although I have caught a slight cold and hoarseness at present.

8th October, 1861.—I was yesterday in the garden wondering I never now heard from you. To-day your letter walked in. I am sure I wrote you last.

I am rather standing back, as you guess, in the literary world at present. I find quite enough to do with my church which is now very large and indeed overfull, and with my frequent little lecturing expeditions. I mean, however, soon a volume of selections; and I am also meditating the plan of a larger new work.

Gorrie is on the *Daily Review*. He wrote me lately wanting me to write a paper a week for it at a certain sum, but I declined. I send a paper now and then to the *Dial*, Peter Bayne's London journal—a very manly honest journal it is.

Of Dobell I know nothing except that he is back to Cheltenham. Bigg I hope to see soon. I have promised to lecture in Ulverston on the 7th of November. Smith's poem is full of beauties, but too much in the track of Tennyson. He is now for ever I fear *under-master* in a school of poetry.

The weather has been very broken here, as well as with you. Yet I have had a number of nice little



excursions, although chiefly on work. I was at Inverness, including Culloden and the Fall of Foyers, in July. In August I was at Greenock and went down the Clyde to Arran, but the day spat misty rain and I saw nothing. In September I was at Sunderland and Kilmarnock, but on both occasions was on duty. My nicest excursion was Monday week past to the Trossachs. I left this at eight morning, traversed 220 miles, and was at Perth at half-past eleven that night. The blue-black masses of Ben Ledi, the swollen river Lubnaig, Ben Venue, the grand Ben A'an, the ghostly, sweet dreaming Loch Achray,—the sail up Loch Katrine, the rush upon Loch Lomond by Inversnaid,—the half seen Alps of Arrochar and Ben Lomond retiring amidst his night canopy of clouds, were all grand. The weather was a deep but rainless chiaro-oscuro.

Mrs. Gilfillan is in usual health and very busy. There are three children with us at present, two at school. These give her work.

11th November, 1861.—I am now back from my little lake excursion which I enjoyed amazingly. I reached Ulverston on Tuesday and found Bigg well. He is a fine genial soul, and his wife is a nice, simple, warm-hearted woman. His father lives next door, and he has some brothers of a remarkable type of character. On Wednesday we went up the lakes, saw Coniston, Windermere, Eastwaite, Rydal Mere, and Grasmere. Of course we went to Rydal Mount and Grasmere churchyard, and took off our hats to that glorious dust reposing there, and when we raised our heads there shone out, as if new made, with startling sudden-

ness and unearthly beauty, the new moon, the type of resurrection and immortality. The scenery in its combination of the bold and beautiful enchanted me, and was in fact almost satiating. Five lakes in one day was too deep a draught.

I lectured to a capital audience in Ulverston on Thursday, went to Carlisle on Friday, lectured there at night, left at six on Saturday morning, was here at two, and preached twice yesterday. I never enjoyed a little trip better.

Bigg speaks with rapture of his visit to Dumfries. By the way I fear he is poor, although seemingly contented.

*7th March, 1862.*—Here I am safe and sound at my study fire answering a myriad letters, and whiles glowering out at the gloomy day.

What a day yesterday was of all kinds of bad weather. First there was heavy rain, then, as I ascended toward Cumnock, snow, and in fine, in Glasgow, a mixture of sleet, snow, and rain, in confusion worse confounded. Worst of all I had no time to dine, and barring a biscuit or two tasted nothing till supper time.

I found our bairns and Mrs. Gilfillan well. The two elder are delighted with your presents, and only regretted you had not appended your name. After all my little pet Agg, or as I call her Mittannus Vallentine, will likely be first into the bowels of your book. She runs through books like wild-fire.

I found a proof waiting me of my paper for next *Scottish Review* on "British and American Literature," the best thing I have done for long. It appears in April.

I need not say how well I enjoyed Mountain Hall with its quiet cracks and genial hospitalities.

*6th October, 1862.*—I had yours on Saturday, but was too busy preparing for my three times to reply. I returned last week from a sojourn of eleven days in England. I went first on public duty to Hartlepool, and thence followed the Gulf Stream of the multitude to the Exhibition. It is certainly a grand bewildering, tantalising spectacle. I was especially pleased with the Picture Gallery, although it too is collected far too much on the multitudinist principle. Yet it was very delightful to float down the stream of the crowd, as if between the banks of the Celestial river, drinking in new beauty at every bend. I recognised with great delight my old friend the Ramsdal Horn painted by a native artist. Some of the historical pieces are very great. There is a powerful head, the most powerful modern head I ever saw on canvas, of Daniel Webster.

I was eight days in London. I called on nobody except a niece who is married there. My brother has now left London. A friend and I took a lodging together near the Strand, and went hither and thither at our own sweet will. By the way I did make one other call on our good friend Dr. John Macfarlane at Clapham ; but he was from home.

JOURNAL.





## JOURNAL.

25<sup>th</sup> December, 1862.—Let me commence this journal upon Christmas day. This day is worthy of its memories, being bright, calm, and, for the season, mild. Many years ago I began to keep a journal; but I was then in my hot youth, and it degenerated into a record of mere moods. Now, in my maturer years, being within a few weeks of fifty, I intend to give to this one a mellower and a more solid character. I cannot say, indeed, that either my youthful ardour or strength is lessened; but I feel that something of the effervescence is gone, and that I can now take a calmer view, on the whole, of the world and of myself. I do not mean to make this a *diary*, but simply now and then, when the spirit moves me, and leisure serves, to jot down thoughts that seem of interest or importance.

It seems a blessed arrangement, although, of course, it is confined to certain parts of the globe, that Christmas and New Year's day occur in the dead season of the year—when days are short, skies sad, the earth often covered with snow, and all things tending to gloom and despondency. How pleasant a friend's letter arriving on a dull, drizzly day! And our Great Friend dropt His letter of everlasting love on this earth at its gloomiest hour, when the sun himself might have seemed weary of his services to this

poor planet, and shrinking away to the extremest verge of the horizon from it. How sad to remember, however, that that "weary winter sun" has returned 1862 times since Christ was born in Bethlehem and sees so little improvement, and the waters of human sin and misery so little abated. Shall it be always thus? Or, should we think so often about it, while we might spend the time, thus gloomily wasted, in energetic efforts to make the world a little better and happier? Alas! our thoughts are not always in our own power, and it does good, sometimes, to ponder on melancholy themes; and thus,

"Sadly spend our Christmas eve."

*27th December.*—I spent Christmas afternoon and evening at Coupar-Angus, in the house of the Rev. D. Marshall. This gentleman has never been sketched, so far as I remember. He is a man of no common powers, and of very peculiar character. He is singularly able and acute, without being either imaginative or original or profound. He sees not only points, but even long and linked chains of argument, with great clearness, but his view is never very broad nor very deep. His weapon is a scimitar, not a claymore. His sense of logical blunders is strong almost to morbidity, and a solecism in argument gives him the same feeling of the ludicrous and the same intense delight which others derive from jokes or puns. It is extremely amusing to watch the expression of his face while an adversary is speaking, and becoming gradually bogged in blunders—a delight like enthusiastic admiration mantles on his face, curls on his lips, and sparkles in his grey eye. You could fancy him

about to burst out into cheers, did you not know your man, and the side he took in the question. When his opponent has ceased, and he rises to reply, his smile becomes grimmer in its character ; nor do you recognise its former joyous aspect till he has spoken for a considerable time, and approached the close of his speech, when again, in all the lightning of triumph, it is there, shining over the rent, torn, and scattered ruins of his adversary's argument. The motion of his mind and speech in debate is very peculiar, resembling that of a certain species of brute destroyers, who approach their prey at first by slow stages, alternating with brief trances of affected slumber, till in fine, having gained a due distance, they rush on fast and fiercely to devour it. So, the first impression in hearing Marshall is that of disappointment. His accent is the broadest Perthshire, his attitudes are awkward, and his utterance slow and somewhat nasal ; but his eye and the shrewdness of his countenance detain you, and by-and-by, as he heats, and hurries on more rapidly, he becomes, if not eloquent, savagely strong. If he cannot sing the Indian's war-song, or dance his poetic dance, he can wield his tomahawk. Mr. Marshall, though a sensible, is a slow, dry, and unimpressive preacher ; but in Presbyteries and Synods he exerts great power, and uses it, in general, with wisdom and with generosity. He is fond of and, perhaps, too conscious of the merit connected with taking the side of the down-trodden, the calumniated and oppressed, the weak and helpless. I knew a man in Edinburgh who did this too, but entirely from vanity, not from either principle or good nature. He thought his fine figure looked finer while standing over and protecting the downcast. Marshall goes to



work from different motives, chiefly, I imagine, from a conviction that few men are much better than their neighbours, and that defaulters are often punished beyond their deserts, and find their bitterest enemies in persons who are rather worse than themselves. A bad opinion of human nature often leads to charity as much as, or more than, a good one, and Marshall, although a kind-hearted man at bottom, and very agreeable in his own dwelling, looks at man with an ultra-Calvinistic eye, and has learned Foster's dark views as well as his slow, sarcastic vein and something of his cumbrous style—without the hope of universal restoration which, at last, formed a silver lining to the sable garment Foster had all his life worn.

Marshall is ageing prematurely. Some years below sixty, he looks like a man of sixty-five. Not only is his hair as white as snow, and his stature somewhat stooped, but his memory is very considerably impaired, and he has got into that lazy garrulity and endless repetition which so plainly reveal the touch of eld, although the shrewd, native fire peeps through ever and anon, and a glance, a word, a sharp retort, show that he is the old man, in one sense, and not the old man, in another. I attribute this ageing not to study, for, although a close and consecutive thinker, he has never been a hard student, and, placed in the country and cultivating a small farm, his circumstances have been favourable to health ; but mainly to the want of that elastic springiness of constitution so often connected with more genial natures, which sometimes preserves the reality of youth after its appearance is gone. He has been rather soured, too, by his position, which he justly deems beneath his powers ; and

there is nothing like vitrolic acid for blanching the hair. He speaks in a tone somewhat too bitter and contemptuous of certain celebrities in the church, whom he evidently deems successful impostors, and talks ominously of being "down upon" them some day. It is of no use. They will practise and prosper, collect crowds and moneys in their large cities, die, and be forgotten; he will fade sternly in his solitude, die, and be forgotten too—they, because their shallow nature found its element in popular applause, an element equally adapted to nourish their life and to decide their oblivion; and he, because, though a very able and honest man, he has not adjusted his powers before the looking-glass of fashion, and yet not had, or not exerted powers, to render such adjustment unnecessary. Disdaining to conform to, he has not been able to overpower or fascinate his age in spite of itself.

On Friday morning I returned home through the beautiful valley of Strathmore. There had been

"A roaring in the wind all night,"

mixed with dashes of rain. Seldom of late have I enjoyed a solitary walk better than from Meigle Station to Newtyle. I have always found in solitude my highest pleasures or my severest mental agonies. This day I was in a mood which recalled, if it did not equal, some of the happiest hours of my life. Through an avenue of trees enclosing the road the sough of the wrestling blast was like thunder. I felt almost literally lifted up on the wings of the wind, and thought for a moment of the possibility of clearing old Kilpurnie Hill striding on the storm. The sere leaves were uttering their eerie oracles as they

now rustled in the blast and now dropt waveringly on the ground. Distant pine-woods shone blue-black in the winter sunshine. There was a fine sprinkling of riddled snow on the Grampians, and the scene altogether was one of dreary grandeur, touched tenderly by the hand of belated and dying beauty. It suggested a thousand thoughts, as does always to me a high wind. Does not this discover a certain mysterious relation between swift mental and swift material motion? How strangely constituted is man that a bickering blaze of fire on the hearth, the sound of a musical instrument, the shrieking of the blast, the flickering of a gas flame, or the rushing of a distant stream, can suggest thoughts, images, and feelings which would never otherwise have arisen! I remember one of the most earnest passages I ever wrote, a comparison of Carlyle and Shelley [see article on Shelley in the First Gallery] came upon me from a black heaven to the tune of a thunder-peal, and was written in the glare of successive flashes of lightning. Instead of such phenomena proving that the soul of man is material, they seem to prove that the Spirit of Nature is Divine, or at least is made of the same stuff with the ethereal principle which works within us. I often rejoice that my lot is cast in a city so that my glimpses of nature, though comparatively few and short, are always fresh. I look at her, not through broad bay-windows, but through intense loop-holes. The other day, coming by the train from Stirling, I had one of those glimpses of glory. A strong blast, with probably

“ In its breast a thunderbolt,”

was blowing. In the north stood up a massive wall

of gloomy cloud, over which suddenly shone out a rainbow, bridging the beautiful valley of the Allan, and resting on Abbey Craig, or, rather, on the new Wallace Monument, which is beginning to rise upon it. I have seen many rainbows of greater brilliance and completeness, but never one so soft in its tints, so melting in its loveliness, so tenderly ethereal. You saw it in the very crisis of departure, in all the delicacy of dissolution,

“Evanishing amid the storm.”

I once saw a rainbow in more peculiar circumstances. In July, 1843, I happened to look from my bedroom window about three or four o'clock in the morning, and was aware of a magnificent arch standing over the valley of the Tay and the smokeless, soundless, sleeping town, the sky the while being clear and bright, with no cloud visible. It had an awful apparitional, yet bewitching aspect; and I retired to bed repeating the words from “Lalla Rookh”—

“And tearless rainbows, such as span  
The unclouded skies of Peristan.”

One could imagine such a glory seen by his own eyes alone, and question afterwards whether it had not been entirely a dream.

*30th December.*—From my excellent friend's, Mr. Muir, Newtyle, I took away with me, to beguile the journey homewards, a volume of Foster's “Reviews.” I began to glance at it with a certain feeling of sadness, produced partly by old associations, although the day was good, the storm being now lulled, and that fine shadow, the half-moon, having arisen to



look at the giant sun ere he set in fire. How she seemed to shrink on her post of observation, as if she had no business there, or none but that of hopeless, insatiate love! In reading Foster on the train, and since, I began to perceive that while my admiration of his genius continued, my sympathy with his feelings and opinions had considerably lessened. There are hours, and days, and months, ay, and sometimes years in which every thinking man is a Foster. But to be a Foster for a life-time, what a destiny! To have been a Foster for seventy-three years—for what ante-natal crime was he condemned to this? A misanthrope compelled to mingle with men; a recluse, instead of making his house the wilderness and the barren land his dwelling, like the wild ass of Scripture, turned into a regular reviewer! How sad, yet curious, to notice how on every book, grave or gay, sacred or profane, that comes across his path, he is sure to cast the shadow of his own spirit! And what transformations to the worse do many noted characters sustain at his hands! Worthy Dr. Beattie, author of the "Minstrel" and the "Essay on Truth," becomes in Foster's view a theatre-haunting man of the world. Hume is sent to hell at once (of course to be included afterwards in that restoration which Foster believed was to happen to all!), Paley (the Pigeon Paley of George III.) is made out to be unsound in faith and an equivocator in the matter of the Thirty-nine Articles. That "mad wag," famous Sydney Smith, is treated, on his clerical aspect mainly, as a popular Tearmouth, a modern orator Henley—although his mental power is rather reluctantly conceded. Foster's views of the Indian religions, too, are fanatically discoloured. He wrote in the first heat of the mission-

ary spirit, and had not learned to make those allowances to which further thought and observation ultimately led him. . . .

13<sup>th</sup> January, 1863.—The year hitherto has been dark, drizzly, and uncomfortably changeable. At a little party where I dined yesterday, a gentleman strongly urged on me that I was lost in Dundee and should go to London, and predicted me great success there. Another person maintained, on the contrary, that Dundee, now a town of 100,000 inhabitants, where he said my popularity had steadily increased with the increase of the town, was my proper field. To-day, looking at the subject calmly, it seems as if much could be said on both sides. On the one hand, I believe that my style of preaching, if I prepared carefully, which, of course, I would do, would suit London and its literary people better than Dundee, especially as my doctrine is becoming wider and less Calvinistic. In my studies and my writing I should secure advantages debarred to a provincial man, in libraries, literary society, the securing of proper publishers, &c. Dr. Croly used often to advise me to this step, and said it was my living in the provinces that prevented me from taking my proper place in the literary world. I feel, too, a kind of fretting when I think of some of those who are at present the popular men in London, all preaching a gospel more or less opposed, I think, to the gospel for the times which I should study to preach. But then—there are other considerations. First, I am on the verge of fifty, and this, although in my case securing maturity and not diminishing strength or energy or

fire, still tends to make me more conservative in feeling, and less willing to change a position I have occupied for nearly twenty-seven years. In the second place, my isolation and pre-eminence here—if I may claim this without vanity—have their advantages; and I have, besides, with all the work I do, more leisure than I could possibly have in London. My manners and habits, too, are better adapted for this town than for the capital. My excellent wife, also, is much better suited for the sphere she fills here with so much usefulness and honour than for the other, although, of course, she would command respect and regard anywhere. On the whole, so long as I am tolerably comfortable, and have a good congregation and a decent competence, and am doing something to educate the mind, particularly the young mind, of the town, I shall probably continue here. How thankful to God should I be for all His kindness to me in this place, and how humble withal!

It is sad sometimes for me to think that, although not old, I have already outlived so many of my contemporaries and friends. My native village companions, John Graham, Donald MacColl, and Peter M'Nab, are all long since dead. Peter M'Laren yet lives, but lives in Glasgow, and I have not seen him for sixteen years. In Comrie, I have not now a single intimate. The people there are either too old or too young for me. I see none of those with whom in early life I sported, with whom I climbed the glorious hills, bathed in the lukewarm pools of the summer of 1826, went "with shining face unwillingly to school," or conversed in earnest though imperfect utterances about the great dawning mysteries of existence, or the wonders of literature beginning to rise around us

like autumnal stars. Hence, much as I admire and revel in the scenery of Comrie, there is no place where I feel so melancholy or lonely at times as there. From its bridge I see the beautiful burn called by courtesy the river Earn, the simple church with the manse under one roof, where my father preached for thirty-six years, and where I was born ; but I see also in the west the graves of both my parents. When I enter Woodside Cottage I almost expect to meet the bowed form of my mother, with her benevolent smile, coming forth to welcome me. Her old chair at the fireside seems yet filled with her figure, and from the bed where she died I half hear still her most pathetic parting address to her children. At Comrie alone, too, after night has fallen, do I feel old superstitious terrors shivering over me, and I tremble at going out by myself, much as when I was a boy.

My college companions were never numerous, and most of those I knew somewhat intimately are gone. George Beveridge, whom I have sketched as B. G. in the "History of a Man," was my most intimate and congenial friend from fifteen to seventeen years of age. He came from Stewarton, Ayrshire, and died in 1835. How vividly I remember taking up a newspaper in the Greenock Reading-Room, while I was preaching in that town as a candidate, and reading the notice—"Died at Stewarton, Ayrshire, Mr. George Beveridge, student in Divinity, aged 25." These few, cold, meagre words touched a deep chord in my heart ; for, although I could hardly be said to have very warmly loved him, yet I had profited much from his conversation, and had some very pleasing associations connected with him. During the session of 1829-30, disgusted, perhaps unreasonably, with Pro-



fessor Ramsay, who then taught the Mathematical Class, I threw it up and generally spent the vacated hour in Beveridge's lodging, where we had for our years and opportunities high talk *de omnibus rebus*. I have, without any exaggeration, pictured him, soul and body, in the "History." There can be no doubt he would, had he lived, and had the stamina of his constitution strengthened, have become a considerable man. How delighted I was in the autumn of 1834, in Glasgow, to meet him again for a short interview or two. I remember our going together to a circulating library and taking out *Tait's Magazine* (for September, I think, it was), containing De Quincey's first paper on "Coleridge," whom we two had, four years before, in our juvenile wisdom, and much to the horror of our associates, who were poisoned by the *Edinburgh Review*, pronounced the greatest mind of the age. And now we found De Quincey calling him the "most spacious and comprehensive intellect that had yet, in his judgment, appeared among men." The light of that autumn eve, shed upon the pages of the article, which I greedily glanced at on the street, seemed celestial. I read to Beveridge one day a sermon which I had preached before Balmer, and which he had rather severely criticised. He spoke in its praise but measuredly, and seemed to think that my style had altered for the worse from my college days. I found that he had at the Divinity Hall of the Established Church, which he was now attending (although he had been originally a Seceder), encountered one or two of the more remarkable men I had met not long before in Edinburgh.

To recur to my own friends who are gone. 'Campbell of Aberdour (see "History of a Man," under

head of Alaster MacTavish), was for one session, 1834-35, my most intimate associate. We spent long hours together by day and by night, I visited him at his mother's house in Rothesay in the summer of 1835, and went with him to see the mansion of the Earl of Bute. For nine years from that date I never saw and scarcely heard of him, till one day in 1844 I met him at the quay in Dundee, an odd, ill-dressed figure, with an old shabby brown great-coat. He had become a probationer in the Established Church, and had at the time very faint hopes of preferment. I saw a good deal of him that year. Once, in particular, we went out to Newtyle, and climbed Kilpurnie Hill where a storm of wind was blowing. I was recovering then from a year or two of dreadful mental misery, and his conversation did something to help me out of it. He said that he had had similar struggles, but had at last come to the most certain conviction that he had a Father. When settled at Aberdour he became a very useful and hard-working pastor, although he had a number of enemies whose opposition continued to the end and served to shorten his days. In May, 1848, I spent a few days along with (Principal) Tulloch and MacCulloch, now of Aberdeen, at Aberdour. These were among the happiest days in my life. The spring was just coming out in all its freshness, and a lovelier spring and autumn than those of 1848 never shone from heaven. The woods which so thickly clustered near Aberdour were in full beauty. The sea was near, and the rocks impending over it and piercing the woodland, suggested to me the scenery of "Guy Mannering." We were all in the highest spirits, and how fast time flew as we walked along the headlands or plunged

into the flowery heart of the woods, or enjoyed after dinner or supper the most delightful symposia! Campbell was no great preacher or writer; but in conversation he often displayed a world of wild humour and fancy, his powers of exaggerative description were great, and his laugh was a very phenomenon of contagious mirth. The last time I saw him was at Dunfermline in 1852, in the company of another dear friend whom, also, I have never seen since. It was a day of much enjoyment, and little thought we that we were never more to meet. Campbell rests now in the bosom of his parish, having died quite a young man, partly of consumption, and partly, I fear, of a broken heart. His sister, Mary Campbell, was and is a remarkable person, exceedingly clever, active, and well informed. I saw her lately at Rothesay; and it was a melancholy pleasure to both to talk of her lost brother.

The same year with Campbell, 1856, dropt away the more brilliant Samuel Brown, and three years afterwards Professor Nichol, the friendship of both of whom I had made in manhood. Andrew Wylie, of Orkney, the William Andrew of the "Man," had perished some years before in New Zealand. George Mackenzie, of Carnoustie, is another early friend who is now dead. Thomas Nichol, of Pitrodie, died in 1845. Noble old Croly sank two years ago; I had no warmer friend than he. Yet let me be thankful that amidst this wide wreck there still float some of my earlier as well as later associates, such as George Jeffrey, of Glasgow, his brother Robert, Hamilton MacGill, James Borwick of Rathillet, Alexander Rutherford, James Lindsay, David Cooke, Dundee, William Robertson, Irvine, William Anderson of

Glasgow, good benevolent William Logan of the same city, Ebsworth, and, besides some others whom I need not name—last, not least—Thomas Aird. For the friendship of such men I feel deeply and daily more and more grateful—whether I regard the losses of friends by death, the alienation of a few others, and the number of literary and other enemies whom I know I have.

*14th January, 1863.*—I got yesterday sent me per post a lecture by John Cairns on “Rationalism, Ritualism, and Pure Religion,” or some such title, and have read it with interest, attention, and with a good deal of admiration of its ability, and, on the whole, of its spirit. But I can see from it that he is not the man to grapple with the scepticism of the age. He has not sufficient sympathy with it; he has not lived in its atmosphere; he has not visited its profoundest, or tossed in its stormiest depths. Intellectually and logically he understands it, as he understands most other matters; but sympathetically and experimentally he does not. Even intellectually he does not look at it in a sufficiently broad light. The true view of modern doubt is that of a giant growth inevitable to our present stage of progress. . . .

*Sabbath, 18th January.*—I felt considerable pleasure in preaching to-day. The church in the afternoon was full and the audience attentive. My text was, “The spirit of the Lord is upon us to preach the gospel to the poor,” &c. I said the Gospel contained an announcement of good tidings, a message of mercy



and healing, a jubilee note of deliverance and freedom, a removal of spiritual darkness, and the proclamation of full pardon and perfect reconciliation. Under the head of the good news I alluded to Tennyson's sentiment in the "Memoriam." In that pretty and very popular, but not theologically profound poem, the Poet Laureate describes an angel or glorified spirit standing on the battlements of heaven, looking down on earth's burning cradles, seas of blood, tides of tears, sin-sodden cities, and saying as he pursues his calm eternal round like a watchman of the skies: "All is well." This I said was beautiful blasphemy. That all things would yet be well I hoped. That all things were tending toward a higher economy and a better I believed, and that God was over-ruling evil for good, and making the wrath of man to praise Him I was certain. But that such horrible outbreaks of passion and red seas of gore as the American war revealed were "well," were, in other words, appointed or approved by God, I utterly denied. And it was this emasculated popular theology—it did not much matter whether it was called Pantheism or Hyper-Calvinism—which had produced a great deal of the sympathy felt at present in Christian countries with despotism, when that despotism was decent and successful; with war, when that war had a few plausible prettexts and did not injure trade; with ignorance, when it served to uphold a false species of piety; with sin, when, like the famous coin of Vespasian collected as a tax on ordure, it did not "smell"; with slavery, when that slavery sought to clothe its nakedness with the fig-leaves of texts from the Pentateuch; and with the devil himself when he came disguised as an angel of light. If "Whatever

is is right," be the text, Atheism must be the inference.

I alluded also to Lincoln's Proclamation of Freedom, and said that I gloried that it had gone forth on all the winds like the great blast of a jubilee trumpet, startling the iron earth and the brazen heaven of Dollar-deifying America, lighting up joy in many a faded African eye and creating hope in many a forlorn African heart, causing the tyrants of Richmond to tremble and the psalms of Stonewall Jackson and his men to quaver and sink in the midst of their blasphemous music. Yet I expressed some doubts as to its being so successful as many expected.

21st January.—To-day William Anderson, after a short stay, has left for Glasgow. I have never, I think, seen him more clearly, or in a more amiable light. Although only a little beyond his grand climacteric he is very deaf, and is almost entirely insulated thereby from society. Yet, if you so far awaken the "echo-cliff" of his ear, and start some favourite theme, he monologises in a very delightful way, now narrating some racy anecdote of the past, now arguing out some knotty question, and now deploring, while exposing, some one or other of the evils and shams of the world. Not only is he insulated by deafness, but by original nature. I have met more brilliant and more accomplished men, but I never met with such a unique. I regard him as, on the whole, the best and most original man in our church, and as the last, except Aird, of the giant race of Christian men of genius who, in Scotland, adorned the earlier part of this century,

such as Chalmers, Irving, Jameson of Methven. Genius and evangelical religion have since gone different ways. Yet it is possible that they may meet again, both of them purified and exalted, under the glorious roof of the Church of the future.

*22nd January.*—I have a rather curt and snell note from Burghley to-day. He seems angry at some hints I have given him as to what I conceive to be the unhealthy conservatism of his religious views. In poetry and politics, though an able man, he has failed to make any impression, and he has plunged into the depths of enquiry, particularly in physiology and the cognate sciences; and when he reports progress from thence the voice comes up like the cry of a spirit in torment. . . . He has the profoundest admiration for Carlyle, and seems all but ready to follow that wild buffalo crashing his way farther and farther into the forest. . . . His whole soul, however, is given to the giants of the early ages of our literature. He worships them partly because they furnish a higher point of view, over-stepping and dwindling our present writers, and partly from real admiration of their strong, healthy genius. . . . Through me he has become a great friend of William Anderson, and how they pelt one another through the post-office, though they have as yet never met! They resemble each other somewhat in their bilious point of view, and in their two-thirds sincere, one-third affected oddity.

*27th January.*—William Logan has sent my wife to-day two photographs of himself. What a kind,

sagacious, homely, delightful face that of the benevolent being is! I sometimes think I see more of our Lord in it than in far comelier countenances. I have seen it, especially when turned upon a child, emit a smile quite heavenly. Mrs. Shelley has a beautiful image in reference to Hazlitt, whom she had not seen for a number of years: "He is so changed that, but for his voice and smile, I should not have known him. The smile brought tears to my eyes. It was like lightning that assured you, in a dark night, of the identity of a friend's ruined and deserted abode." Logan's smile, on the other hand, is a celestial light, giving assurance of the region whence the noble soul has come, and to which it is to return. Jameson of Methven's face, too, gleamed at times with beautiful irradiations from within: from within, and yet they seemed to have fallen from above. We often mistake in this way. It is the God-touched soul that erects the cloven tongue of fire. . . . Logan's career has been a peculiar one. He was a handloom weaver in Hamilton, then was with a grocer in Glasgow. He has been a city missionary in London, Bradford, Leeds, Rochdale, Glasgow, and now keeps temperance dining-rooms in the last-named city. Logan has plunged into London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow brothels and rescued this and the other victim from the horrible pit. Some of his converts are now respectable wives and mothers in Australia and elsewhere, and write him letters glowing with gratitude. Some people think him a pious simpleton. It is a great mistake. He has a certain weakness and hero-worship, but his judgment is generally sound, his instinctive perceptions are at once healthy and keen, and his views are



wonderfully liberal. Holyoake calls upon him in Glasgow, and is received as a brother. I am sure Logan does more thus to create respect for religion in that man's mind, than if all the religious periodicals in the world were down upon him unceasingly for a twelvemonth.

*29th January.*—What a day of storm and wind and rain! There are moods in which I have all my life enjoyed windy weather. One of my early recollections is that of a long happy autumn forenoon, spent in Comrie on the south side of a hedge, while a great north wind was blowing, wafting the sere leaves and purging the sky into the intensest of autumnal blue. I was then about ten or eleven and my soul was in a poetic ecstasy. With Zanga, "I love this rocking of the battlements" and to feel my imagination shed like a leaf upon the storm. No music is so enchanting as that of a wind at night without the casement. I have often in the morning wondered what was giving me such unusual exaltation of mind till, on looking out, I found there was a mighty wind abroad on which I was riding, unawares. . . . I can conceive no more inspiring day than one spent in Ballochbuie forest during an autumnal tempest, seated under some rock secure and listening to the deep thunder of the wind through those giant pines, with the voice of the stream pouring its wail through the roaring solitude. . . . To-day the wind has stirred but hardly cheered me. It has carried me away to scenes of the past, but returning I am not happier. . . . Happy, indeed, I never was, though I enjoy parts and passages of life as intensely as any living man. Not

only have I dark hours—though not so dark, thank God, as they once were—but I have not within me that deep inner fund of serene satisfaction, that golden joy which many Christians profess at least to have. This is no doubt partly my own fault as a very imperfect man, partly the result of my peculiar temperament, always moody and changeable. But that is not all. The mystery of existence deepens its burden with years, although my shoulders are now broader and stronger to bear it. . . . I often wonder how lightly this burden presses upon many! Among the ministers I know there are not half-a-dozen who appear to understand the very nature of the difficulty.\* Contented with their formulas, or fighting, poor fellows, with their own narrow circumstances and other trials, . . . they have just so much consciousness of our present transitory and twilight state as to incite them to suspicion and heresy-hunting. I am, I know, at present, an object of this charitable and Christian practice, but shall ask and hope to receive strength to speak advisedly whatever truth there is in me.

*Sabbath, 1st February.*—I preached to-day on the words, “The peace of God which passeth all understanding.” In the evening I began my lectures on the parables of Christ with one on the prodigal son. The church was crowded, the people consisting chiefly, as at all my evening lectures, of masses of young men and women—very attentive. I strongly insisted on the parables being, as a whole, truth-possessed fictions.

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\* This cannot be said now of any large number of Scottish clergy. The burden is in the air.

A writer in *The Warder* had a small spiteful paper on a former statement of mine to the same purpose, and without naming it I, in effect, replied. I pointed especially to one or two circumstances in the parable of Dives and Lazarus—such as Dives, in his immaterial state, seeking water for his tongue and being tormented in material flame—as showing that it was not a real account of the future state. I took occasion, while speaking of the prodigal going away with the portion of goods given him by the father, to deny that man is utterly vile, worthless, and corrupt. . . . He who calumniates human nature, who sees no good, no worth, no moral duty therein, blasphemes God the Maker, and Christ the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter.

[In the week following he lectured on Modern Scepticism and Colenso.]

5th February.—I dined before lecture in the house of a Free Churchman, and met three or four of the more intelligent of that school, such as Mr. Henry Ferguson and Mr. Knight,\* a young clergyman. Both have extensive knowledge and culture, and the latter very considerable metaphysical ingenuity: in neither do I find any cant or formality. Yet the presence of foregone conclusions showed itself now and then visibly enough. Mr. Knight, for instance, while talking of the Pentateuch, insisted on premising miracle as a necessary postulate,† just as Neander, in

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\* Professor Knight of St. Andrews, now.

† It should be observed that this conversation took place thirty years ago.

his "Life of Christ" premises the divinity as a necessary postulate for considering the history. I think each a plain begging of the question. . . . To suppose an incessant stream of miracle running as an under and opposing current to the tide of universal law is in the last degree absurd and unfair. . . . It takes tacitly for granted the whole question as to the nature of miracle, whether it be an infraction of law, or simply the out-shining of a higher law within the other—like, shall I say? the soul of a man kindling and inspiring a dull eye.

*7th February.*—This is Saturday evening, an evening in which I generally try to reach a serene altitude of mind and to feel the ante-past of the rest of the morrow in my mind. I generally spend the hour between eight and nine in reading, and the two authors I go regularly through are Bunyan and Burke—Bunyan for spiritual benefit and Burke for intellectual profit and pleasure, and both for imaginative suggestion. How beautiful in their similarity and dissimilarity, the two: the one, with that sparkling eye ever seeing "the Way" plain as a rule could make it, the other, profound, circumspective genius of Ireland and India, contemplating all the crooked paths of statecraft and the complicated interests of nations with the calmest and most commanding vision: yet both with hearts ever ready to leap towards the new, the imaginative, the tender.

*9th February.*—Mr. Knight has a letter signed with his initials in to-day's *Advertiser* on Colenso.



It is the first of a series, and is written in a fair and manly spirit, though not, as I think, quite satisfactory, for reasons stated above.

*20th February.*—Disagreeable sour afternoon, that of yesterday, the penalty of being too happy the evening before. Truly, as Emerson has it, "Nothing is given, all things are sold."—Wrote a bit of "Night," going over Night's poets—Job, David, Homer and Æschylus. I think it will please the *initiated* at least, and vanity whispers that perhaps as a whole it will perpetuate my name.

*1st March.*—Preached to-day twice, having to lecture in the evening, too, in continuation of The Prodigal. In the forenoon, commencing a lecture on Kings, I spoke strongly on the propriety of saying little at present as to the difficulties of the Old Testament till we had more light on the subject, as there is so much in the book, unassailed, from which fruit can be derived. In the afternoon I preached on "Arise, O God, and let Thine enemies be scattered," inquiring, first, how God can have any enemies, and resolving it into the general difficulty as to the origin of moral evil; secondly, showing that by birth man could not possibly be an enemy of God, but was become so by the evil thing in his nature—whatever that was—finding the law of God contrary to it; thirdly, classifying the enemies of God as those who voluntarily denied His existence—voluntarily rejected His word—refused the offer of mercy in Christ—cherished secret hatred under the cover of a fair profession and showed it by

their want of love to man, their malevolence and falsehood. In the second part of the discourse I spoke of God arising, first, every day in Nature, second, in the progress of genuine science and philosophy, thirdly, in the advance of Christian knowledge, unfolded by genuine philosophy, and fourthly, in the great dawning of the future, predicted again and again in the Word of God.

In the evening lectured to a very crowded house, speaking toward the close, of the elder brother and his jealousy of the younger as illustrated among us now.

*19th March.*—Glanced over a good part of my "Covenanters" yesterday. I see in it the germ of what should have been my best book, and regret that I wrote it hastily and *to order*. It is better liked by the general public than anything else I have done, but I ought to have made it a standard work. Oh, that vile haste of my temperament, how much it has injured me as a man and an author !

*20th March.*—It is twenty-one years to-day since our dear, dear Agnes Vallentine closed amid terrible agonies and cruel tears her short earthly pilgrimage. I have told her simple story in "The History of a Man," and never did I write anything more sincerely or with more burning sorrow. Now, how calmly beautiful she looks through the lapse of years. I remember her climbing my knee and crying, "My dear Mr. Infillan!" and once going hand in hand with me through the fields when I was very dull and

saying, "Oh, I maun try and comfort ye." On one of my visits to her when she was dying, I spent a night of wind and rain (what a tempest it was!) in the house of old David Blackadder, an elder in Brechin. He was a good man, a father to me and some other ministers—hospitable, sonsy, full of auld-world sagacity and auld-world stories.

*24th March.*—I go to lecture in Brechin this afternoon, a town with which I have many pleasing associations. One of the happiest little times I ever had in that region was in September, 1860, after I returned from Norway. One evening's walk along the bank of the North Esk with my darlings the Vallentine bairns, was peculiarly delightful. But the most delicious hours were one forenoon alone, a mile or two below Arnhall. My thoughts oscillated between the mild beautiful scenery around, and the bold and solemn grandeurs of Norway. I felt perfectly happy.

Heard to my great grief that Langiewicks the hero of Poland is a prisoner at Cracow. Poor Poland! Freedom must continue to shriek as thy heroes fall, and Russia dances a Yahoo dance over murdered liberties and martyred patriots. Lord God, how long?—Or is that old cry now silent under the altar?  
*No!*

*26th March.*—Went over to Edinburgh to speak at the induction soiree of my good friend Andrew Gardiner who is leaving Kincardine for Dean Street. I like the man well, and would wish, if I can, to

serve him. His wife has been an invaluable ally to him.

Away from home I never get my usual quantity of sleep. At home eight hours is my minimum.

*1st April.*—Cloudy and snell, which makes you think yourself and everybody else a fool. What a comfortable conclusion! And here comes in Hogg's "statement," about my books. . . . "The Bards" has in three years and a-half only brought me £11, 10s. 6d. . . . Well, my worthy father never made £50 all his life by his writings, and I have made about twelve hundred.\* So let me try and be satisfied. . . . But the worst of want of success in authorship is, that it damps your efforts in new projects. What use, I feel now, of elaborating "Night" to lie stinking in cellars? What a lottery is literature! What an uncertain veering thing at the best, and at what a disadvantage men are placed who, like me, work in the provinces, single-handed, far from libraries and the stimulus and guard of literary society. Aird has felt this. But I won't pursue this morbid track.

*9th April.*—I have had a little dispute with Burghley about the relative merits of Church of England and Dissenting authors. I challenged him to show such names in his church (living names) as Foster for sublime and original meditation, Hall for classical dignity, Chalmers for broad Christian influence and

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\* Chiefly by editing the Poets.



overwhelming eloquence, Irving for demoniac force and apostolic zeal, and Samuel Davidson for Scripture criticism. The English Church has only one great author—Robertson of Brighton—and “he is a Samaritan.” . . . Burghley pours out a diatribe against the names I have mentioned. . . . All controversies of the kind become at last one-sided and unfair, but I hold to my general statement. The English Church is no longer what it was, the main column of Protestantism. It is an old minster, with the organ and the altar pieces in high preservation, but undermined and deserted of life.

11th April.—In to-day's *Dumfries Herald* some of Macaulay's jottings on the fly-leaves of books, discovered in some old volumes by James Hamilton.

They are very characteristic ; decisive, sharp, dogmatic, but strong and sensible. He characterises Warburton well—his tantalising half-gleams of truth, his almost scholarship, his paradoxes coming forth like pigs, fifteen to the litter, and many of them blind for life. . . . By the way, I wonder Macaulay never read “The Divine Legation” till he was nearly thirty-five years of age. I read all I could get of it, a volume or two, ere I was twenty, and have not seen it since. Bartoline Saddletree was always saying, “What gar my father no' send me to Utrecht?” I often exclaim, perhaps with a little more reason, what a pity I had not early access to great libraries, literary society, and other London and Cambridge opportunities.

13th April.—I have been looking into Emerson's "Conduct of Life." He shines in fractions, like bits of broken glass. I did not take to him very much when he was here in 1848. He was very pleasant and amiable-seeming, but there was a deep in his character as well as in his thought. I remember Professor Nichol telling me, that, one evening in a company in Liverpool, while Nichol was talking in his usual frank, free, way to some gentlemen of the party, he noticed Emerson fixing on him from a corner two eyes, like those of a basilisk from a bush, searching and soundless. I had precisely the same feeling one night while talking with him in his bedroom in this house. I was discoursing to him somewhat confidentially, the gas-light between us, when I became suddenly aware of two eyes looking into my very soul. It seemed as if the body had vanished, and those strange serpent glittering eyes alone remained! . . . My good thoughtful wife asked him privately if he had any objection to join in our family worship. He said he had none and knelt with the rest of us. I went to Perth through a deep snow-storm to hear him lecture on Napoleon. The Fair City did not much appreciate him. We supped after lecture at a bailie's house, and nothing amused me more than to see one or two straitlaced Presbyterians watching the motions of Ralph Waldo as if he had been a monster. They seemed astonished to find him a mild and sober man. I parted with him at the door of the hotel where he was to sleep, and have not seen him since, nor heard from him, except a month afterwards in a present of one of his books. He has heard from me, and somewhat too fiercely, I admit, though, at the time, most sincerely.

I had a glorious dream-glimpse of Comrie last night. I seemed seeing it from a distance, with mellow gleams of autumn light shed through openings in the clouds upon its woods, and hills, and spire. In all my dreams of scenery I never saw anything so vividly set in so celestial a radiance.

*15th April.*—How comes it that our feelings on awaking from sleep, are either of the blackest or the brightest complexion? What a sense of loneliness and of insignificance comes over one sometimes on waking in the early morning!—what memories of past follies and sins!—how many cares and mortifications return in exaggerated forms, and, though you curse them, will not let you go. What a feeling of the awful mystery of existence comes over you, and how great appears your and all men's ignorance! . . . At other times awakening is one of the rarest of enjoyments, and makes all things new; everything shines and sparkles around you, and you feel that your heart, could you see it, would be shining and sparkling too, the lost splendour returns to the grass, and the glory to the flower, and joys that you had left years behind thrill through your being again. Some such awakings I remember having when I was a boy in Comrie, and had fallen asleep among the woods or in the hollows of the hills. How glorious then looked the landscape — almost intolerably glorious.

*16th April.*—Wrote at "Night" in the evening—well, I think. Curious if this should prove my

*magnum opus.* John Steel, *the Scotsman*, has been urging me to write the life of Wallace. 'Twere a grand theme, but would require immense research and more time than I can command.

19th April.—Communion. Preached the Action sermon on "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." I magnified Christ—First, for His moral teaching, supreme in its simple comprehensiveness, its depth, and its relation to His matchless life; secondly, for His revelation of the true character of God as a Father; thirdly, as the revealer of the true and only Supernaturalism; fourth, as the Atoner for guilt; and, fifth, as the unveiler of the future. My brother with me, who preached well, especially on Monday. Large attendances and comfortable day.

25th April.—Last night I spoke at the great anti-slavery meeting. William Anderson came and made a strange bizarre but telling speech. A scene occurred during my remarks. I said that the Union even if patched up to-morrow, would speedily fall to pieces. A few persons raised a clamour at this, and old Smith, the American Consul, rose on the platform in a rage, and cried, shaking his staff, "The American Union will last after all other governments are gone!" I repeated the sentence three or four times in a storm of mingled hisses and cheers, until I was allowed to proceed uninterruptedly. Enjoyed a quiet crack with Anderson till two in the morning. He is away home, and I proceed this afternoon to spend a few days in the north.



*3rd May.*—Preached rather poorly to-day. I was fearfully flat in the forenoon (I think with a cold) though the subject was great—the dedication of the temple. Lectured at night to a considerable audience with much more pleasure.

. . . In concluding my remarks on the parable (the Good Samaritan) I referred to my own position as a Millenarian. There were moments, I admitted, when the Pre-Millennial Advent seemed even to me a dream—too good news to be true. I had been, indeed, always an outlying Millenarian, holding no connection and having little sympathy at other points with sects and persons who held the doctrine. But there were moments of deep despondency which nothing but the hope of a future revelation could cheer, and when I felt nothing for it—being impartially sick of pantheistic speculation on the one side, and of superstitious pietism on the other—nothing for it but despair, sullen and speechless as the lips of death, *or* a look upwards of hope and a cry upwards of eager desire. “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Thou and Thou alone art able to open the book of this perplexed and afflictive time, and to loose the seals thereof!”

*6th May.*—Weighed down for two days by a horrid half-formed influenza. Tried to work at “Night” last evening, but could not finish a single line. I have read all Kinglake’s first volume on the Crimean War. What pictures of the magnificent old bear of the north fretting amid his snows as if they were volcanic fires, with insatiate ambition and religious zeal dividing his heart between them, “touching a bell with his hand” and there is a great war—of Sir Stratford

Canning, the cool, courteous, indomitable counter-actor of the Czar, wrapping up his grimmest refusals in butter and honey—of Palmerston, the smiling master of every situation, waltzing through wars, always jaunty and cool, a very icicle hanging from the eaves of Bellona's temple!—of Cobden and Bright, self-gagged and obliged to mutter when they should have been loud and eloquent—of Louis Napoleon, a French silk weaver, clad in his uncle's great-coat and boots, with a daring in raising critical moments like demons, and a helplessness in laying or commanding them, with that low ambition which stamps Louis the conscious *parvenu*, as it did old Nap the conscious brigand. They are all admirably executed, and yet Kinglake is hardly a forcible or felicitous writer. His style is loose and rambling, but his knowledge and insight are of no ordinary kind. Had he the brilliant colours and sharp antitheses of Macaulay, what a book he would have made of his subject! At the same time he gives you the impression of truthfulness as Macaulay never does. I long for the second volume.

I think with him that Cobden and Bright have injured their own principle by perpetually obtruding it, and above all by connecting it with a society. So have the Teetotallers; but their society works. How can a Peace Society work? Teetotalism appeals to individuals, and the appeal is intelligible, but what is meant by joining the Peace Society? Every Christian and every man worthy of the name is a member already of a Peace Society, the great simple rule of which is, "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men." . . . To separate any one part of virtue and morals from the rest, and inculcate that as the whole

duty of man, may seem at first to give a proper prominence and additional power to that principle, but this is in general short-lived and illusory, a reaction follows, and then the special virtue falls back into its own place, and the residuum of good done is seldom more than the ordinary march of society and religion would have led to.

*7th May.*—Two requests to-day, one to attend a preliminary meeting of Thomas Aird's friends, who are to get up a testimonial for him on his leaving the *Dumfries Herald* for private life. I cannot be present, but have written urging them to make the gift worthy at once of the town and of its most distinguished and honoured citizen. Aird has been twenty-nine years in Dumfries, growing in esteem every year, until now he is indisputably *the* man and the quiet king of the place. He is sixty last August, and has a notion of spending the decade from sixty to seventy in a Sabbatical manner. Chalmers had the same idea, but he died when sixty-seven, and his last seven years were the most restless and agitated of his career. I earnestly trust that Aird's wish may be fulfilled. Nervous anxiety, producing the curse of sleeplessness, has been his great foe.

There is to be a great conversazione of the Working Men's Club, in the Hanover Square Rooms, London, on Monday, and to this, Lord Brougham, Lord Lyttleton, and the Dean of Chichester invite me and my lady. I have seen the day when this would have made me proud, now it only tells me that I have a fair share of reputation, and some friends. I have respectfully declined. My wife, who claims some

tenth cousinship with Lord Brougham, laughingly says it is this that has brought the invitation. So be it!

8th May.—I must write no more at poetry till I am quite well again.

*Punch* is hitting hard to-day at sensational literature. Yet that, like all other varieties of literature, must be founded upon some age, fact, or principle. Our age is getting tremendously active and excited, and it craves an excited literature. This, if not a healthy symptom, is, at least, true to the character of the time. Where murders, seductions, and fearful accidents are common, there will be not only matter of fact records in the newspapers, but *aliases* of them in novels. In the room where a murder is committed, while the blood is flowing on the floor the mirror on the wall is reflecting it. Sensationalism in literature is no novelty. We find it in Werther, French novelists, the Satanic poetry of Byron, *et cetera*. The difference now is that it has got down through new channels among lower ranks of readers. Sensationalism in the pulpit is no novelty either. There was a Whitfield and an Orator Henley, and there has been a Chalmers and an Irving as there is now a Spurgeon. In journalism, too, there have been a Junius and a Cobbett before the days of a *Saturday Review*. What is *Punch* itself but a repertory of sensation jokes,—which was preceded by Joe Miller and by *The Anti-Jacobin*? The worst of sensationalism is that it augurs a certain degeneracy. . . . In religion it is revivalism, and what a pitiful thing has the history of that been, on the whole!



*Same day.*—There are at present in our churches a number of half-developed, clever and cultivated men, but none, perhaps, of whom any but their own familiar friends expect much that is permanently great. If I am wrong about John Cairns he has revenge in his own power. Let him fill the ample round of the Cæsarean laurels already voted to him with the Cæsarean head! Dr. Cunningham, who was a singularly able and honest man, is gone without fulfilling his destiny. Ere he could become the cowl to Calvin he was taken away. Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander can hardly now be called the coming man, since he has been some thirty years before the public, the *facile princeps* of the Congregational body in Scotland, and ranking with the foremost of his church in England. He is highly accomplished, in some departments even learned, a clear and animated writer, a good speaker, kindling at times into fiery logic or eloquent declamation. Yet he wants some of the elements of greatness. His geniality as well as his temper is doubtful. A great man may want the latter—witness Burke—but cannot want the former. Alexander has a deal of affectation about him, and is only in part progressive, for ever sounding a retreat after proclaiming an advance. As to the Establishment, Robertson of the High Church I considerably respect as a clear-brained, solid, well-cultured, and worthy man, but have no hope in his deliverances, nor, I suspect, has any one else. Caird [now Principal Caird] besides being eloquent, is a very refined, lucid, and candid thinker, but he dare not say in full what he thinks. . . . The real want, after all, among our Scottish and our English divines, too, is not talent and learning, but genius, or else honesty. They have

either not the genius to see or not the honesty to speak about the real evils and difficulties of the time, and they trust too much in the power of multitudes and money, the *vis inertia* of custom, and a hundred other refuges of lies, instead of going boldly and frankly forward and telling the world that its difficulties and their difficulties are the same.

10th May.—Preached twice to-day with animation and some pleasure, although contradicted sorely by a hoarseness. In the forenoon was rather enlarged toward the close, speaking of the pleasure in the fulfilment of a great purpose — my subject “The Temple of Solomon.” I quoted Gibbon’s delightful account of his completion of “The Decline and Fall,” saying, however, that the position of a man who submits cheerfully to the failure of a great design is grander still. I closed by speaking of God’s delight when His plan of human salvation shall be finished, and the immense majority of the human race shall be brought home.

16th May.—See the Synod’s decision about the union with the Free Church. They have leapt forward to the appointment of a committee. This union I have never liked. It does not proceed from any desire for union in the majority of the members or perhaps the ministers of either Church. . . . The aggrandising and absorbing spirit is one of the worst symptoms of our day. The parties had better go to school to be taught some of the signs of the times.

Have felt depressed to-day. Mr. G. of Greenock

called, and we had a little more talk. [They had met an evening or two before at a private party.] He thinks Dr. Caird pretty far gone in Mauricianism. I don't know, and don't very much care. Mauricianism is a mist, certainly, but it is a mountain mist, and there may be a day behind it. Mr. G. had heard Caird preach on the manna in the wilderness, and he complained that Christ was never mentioned. Caird probably shrinks from that vulgar typology which abounds, and which, in its excess, has so perplexed the meaning of the Old Testament. But as Christ seems to apply the figure to Himself, we may apply it too.

On reflection,—Christ seems rather to contrast Himself with the manna in the wilderness when He says, "I am the bread of life."

I have read to-day the most of Kinglake's second volume. It is somewhat too sensibly perfumed with prejudice against the French. His account of the battle of the Alma is Homer, but Homer in the land of the lotos-eaters. He crawls and makes you crawl with him up the heights. The battle seems to last a century. And yet there are points of great power, such as the fate of the tall Russian who was the soul of his battalion, the arrival of Lord Raglan at the top of the hill, and the charge of the Highland Brigade. Raglan figures very strikingly, with his quiet decision, his brief irresistible words, and his armless sleeve wagging out victory. Since the days of the gallant Widdrington heroes have been all the more interesting for mutilation. Had Napoleon limped on one leg he might have led the old guard to a triumphal Waterloo. A head is almost the only thing necessary to a general.

17th May. — Mr. M. of Glasgow, a Wesleyan, preached for me in the afternoon. He is a severe, Puritan-looking man, with a sad, stern, half-squinting eye. He is said to be a good scholar, and his sermon from Ezekiel i. 26—"On the likeness of the throne there was the likeness of a man," was almost great here and there,—something in the style of Owen's "Meditations." No fancy or foliage, but, to me at least, almost riveting.

20th May. — A rumour to-day of an armistice between the American armies. Would it were true! The fight at Fredericksburg is appalling. Three days of butchery, with the May sun looking on and the May flowers soaking in gore. What a record the private history of that hideous war must be when written. Anderson told me a story of a little fellow who, when he saw his brother returning mutilated, nay mangled, burst into a passion of tears and almost immediately expired.

21st May. — No news to-day of any certainty, though there is a rumour that Hooker has surrendered. In "Old Mortality" Scott alludes to those strange *avant-coureurs* reports of real events which outstrip all the regular means of communication, and seem as if carried by the birds of the air. Does a strong presentiment, working on a mind or minds anxiously concerned, and well acquainted with the probabilities, lead to some prophetic utterance? Whatever the cause, the fact is certain. Scott does not seek to explain, but says merely that such



rumours, correct in the main point, though inaccurate in detail, are not unlike the shadows of coming events which occupy the mind of the Highland seer.

[The Journal records, from day to day, the news of this terrible war, in which Mr. Gilfillan's sympathies were not so engaged by the North as might have been expected from his passionate and devoted service of the emancipation cause. He did not see what is now evident, that it was bound to become an emancipation struggle as it went on. For Gilfillan, as for his friend Aird, it was a struggle of independence chiefly, and the lover of Kossuth and of Mazzini gave some applause to the gallant spirit of the Southern States. But, he adds, "I have no profound liking for either party."]

*25th May.*—Preached in the evening, yesterday, to a good though not crowded house on the proposed union,\* which I opposed decidedly.

Stonewall Jackson is dead. He fevered with the amputation of his wounded arm, and has, I dare say, retreated reluctantly from a scene where he played so peculiar a part. He was the Rupert-Cromwell of the South, resembling Rupert in his fiery charge, and Cromwell in his iron energy and religious enthusiasm. He must be a great loss to the South, but the North will not wear mourning for him.

*26th May.*—Leave to-day for a few days in Comrie. The weather is not yet very genial. I intend taking

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\* Ecclesiastical union in Scotland.

this Journal and my poem with me, and doing a little to both in that quiet valley and under those hills standing stately in their everlasting musings. I have often written best at Comrie—the best portions of the “Destiny of the Bible” in the “Bards” for example.

*27th May.*—Comrie. Reached this last night. The ride west from Crieff in the evening was charming, though cold. The north-west sky was floating in paley gold, and the contrast between it and the blue ethereal evening hills and the fresh new foliage of the woods was extremely fine. The road from Crieff to Comrie, on the northern approach, runs through a nearly uninterrupted avenue of trees. The village, as you come to it from the east, has a sweetly sheltered look, trees and woods clustering fondly round it on all sides save the south, where the country is bare and cold looking. The great Grampians look lovingly on, walling in the whole. To-day is bleak and grey, but cannot keep down the beautiful aspect of the place.

*30th May.*—Returned from Comrie last evening. It was on the whole a pleasant little run. I strayed by my old rivers; saw the pools I used to bathe in when a boy; dipped my feet in the bright green blaeberry bushes which are just losing their delicate blossom and have not yet gained their fruit, but are this season peculiarly rich; and stared and better stared at the fine, old mountains, although these have not yet clothed themselves fully with the ferns and grass of summer. Yesterday I had a drive to Loch Earn, and seldom enjoyed the dear valley, which

winds up to it, better. Aberuchill Castle still stands white amidst its great, green trees and below its bold, bleak mountains. Dalchonzie lurks still amid its woods and still listens to the near voice of its faithful bard, the Earn. Still under the shadow of the high, precipitous, razor-ridged mountain of Dundurn cowers the young Ochil, as I used to call it, the verdant little hill of St. Fillans, looking at present exquisitely lovely, so fresh is the green which flushes out at every crevice of its rocks. And still Loch Earn breaks blue into sight surrounded by its deep setting of hills, gemmed with two small, meek islands, and, as I saw it yesterday, touched by the north-west wind into crested billows. I did not go far enough up the loch to see Ben Voirlich, but had always the idea that he was behind that screen of meaner hills. I saw near Dunira one or two trees, of the ash species, I think, with leaves so yellow that they seemed veritable leaves of gold. It was fine in returning eastward to catch the first glimpse of Melville's Monument looking west above its dark firs and suggesting the memory of the marvellous view commanded from the hill which is its pedestal. The ride by coach to Crieff in the afternoon through the avenue of trees was very pleasing, and the golden eagle of the evening expanding its cloudless wings over Perth, Kinfauns, the Tay, and the Carse of Gowrie, was sublime.

Yet ere I left Strathearn disenchantment had begun. I saw at Crieff the debate in the Free Church Assembly on the Union. How ridiculous the hope repeatedly expressed in the discussion that the union of the two bodies would form an era in the history of the Church and create a compact and invulnerable

phalanx against the assaults of sceptics. Candlish gives the new church its name—the Free United Church. He points out its future professors, including all the present of both denominations, and John Cairns besides. He settles for ever its theology, discipline, and worship. It is to be “Calvinistic, Presbyterian, Non-Erastian,” and to have no novelties. It is also to “nationalise” the Church. What a pleasant, little programme he seems to have carried in his pocket and suddenly produced.

*2nd June.*—Resumed “Night” yestereve and wrote nearly fifty lines. Have come now to characterise old Young of the “Night Thoughts”—

“The bard, what d’ye call him, that wore the black gown.”

Must at him again in the evening.

7 P.M.—Feel I cannot write poetry to-night. I am not in a specially good trim. I have seen some instances to-day of the selfishness and falsehood of human nature which are almost incredible. . . . I sometimes wonder, looking at the mad contest of this world as a whole, that the Great Umpire has not long ago dropt his warder as in the ancient tournaments and brought the bloody and miserable scene to a close.

I see Aird’s dinner noticed in a paper to-day. Sixty gentlemen sat down and they gave the dear “Old Bachelor” a piece or pieces of plate. That plate somehow jars on my feelings in reference to such a man.



4th June.—Yesterday the morning was wet, but at 9 o'clock it cleared up and we started for the Den of Airlie. It was altogether a delightful excursion. The river Islay, a few miles above the old castle of Airlie, enters a gorge or glen with uncommonly steep and lofty banks covered generally with trees, and through that it winds, now tormented by rocks, and now gliding smoothly over a smooth channel for about five or six miles when it gains the open country. The great charm of the whole glen lies in the variety of its scenes and in the fine gradations by which it rises from the beauty of the lower den, through the boldness of the upper to the terrific grandeur of the "Slugs." The only scene I ever saw approaching it is one on the banks of the Findhorn near Forres; and that has nothing quite so grand as the "Slugs." The castle itself is that "Bonnie House o' Airlie" famous in song.

6th June.—John Cairns writes me to-day gravely objecting to the introduction of the Union into the pulpit and defending the Union. The letter is friendly in its tone. In answer to it I take the ground of the broader latitude I would give to the pulpit than he, and tell him, in fine, that I think the Union would be a heavy blow and great discouragement to the cause of real, enlightened, truth-seeking, Catholic Christianity.

I see a report of Aird's dinner to-day in the *Dumfries Herald*. His speech is exceedingly fine; modest, tasteful, and full of quiet beauty; only his allusion to the labours required in a weekly paper makes one smile. His have always been, in proportion to those

of many other editors, exceedingly light. But he is nervous, and a little work goes a great way with him. His retreat altogether is a most dignified one.

*9th June.*—In reply to another letter from John Cairns, in which he speaks of “preserving the vital principles of Calvinism,” I tell him that I am not aware of any vital principles in Calvinism which are not in many other *isms* included under the general name of Christianity, and that I deplore the continued identification of Calvinism with Christianity in Scotland. Perhaps we were not yet ripe for the revising of our creeds; but I did not expect much effectual aid in this matter from the Union. I said that this is a time for going forward, not backward, for pursuing honest and profound inquiry, not for re-swearing with half heart and in their entirety the dogmas of the past. It is quite clear from his letters that Cairns is in no way a progressionist.

*10th June.*—A note from Gall & Inglis who have bought the copyright of the “Covenanters” and wish me to revise it a little for a new edition. I ought to have secured that copyright for myself when it was sold, with a view to a complete edition of my works. I sometimes wish that I had never had anything to do with publishers; and yet, at one time, there was nothing for me between ruin and becoming an author. I may get into the new edition my introductory chapter on history (omitted in the second edition), one of the best things I ever wrote.

In the evening, which was warm and beautiful after

a thunder-storm, wrote with considerable force and pleasure at "Night." Am at present describing Byron's "Night;" then I have Wordsworth's, Shelley's, and perhaps Tennyson's, and Bailey's, and so through with one book of my work. Feel rather dull and hopeless to-day, but must not allow my mind to submit to moods, and should not, perhaps, allow my pen so often to record them.

Have just got and read Croly's posthumous book on Job. It has interested and yet greatly disappointed me. It is for one thing far too short, and as an investigation of the many questions connected with that most difficult book is extremely imperfect. Of the high poetic glory of the book, where I thought he would have shone, he says little or nothing, and on the difficulties connected with the speech of the Deity he is carefully silent. He is greatly too cavalier in his treatment of other writers on the subject, and is evidently not deep in its literature. His notion that the book is a typical prophecy of the history of the Jews is ingenious enough, but rests on little evidence. The style, however, has all the clear energy of his earlier days, although less of the metaphorical and brilliant. No single fine passage, such as you might have expected from the author of *Salathiel*, occurs throughout. I greatly doubt if his son has consulted his father's reputation in publishing this little work. The biography is brief and, of course, highly laudatory; too much so for my estimate at least, which was yet high. I admired Croly greatly for his manhood and manly sense, for his honesty, genius, and true Milesian impetuosity of character. But I thought him hide-bound in his political and religious views, with no progressiveness as a thinker. Still withal I loved and

honoured him, and he was far more generous to me than most of my brethren in Scotland. He lived to be eighty years of age and died as he wished to die in a moment, bending not till he broke. (It was his desire to fall asleep in his arm-chair and waken in another world, and this was nearly his fate.) His son writes with fluency and vigour, but I think errs first in not giving some of his father's letters, which were exceedingly racy, and in their free dashing force gave you a high idea of his powers ; and secondly in over-estimating his value as a theological author and as a preacher. To prefer him as an orator to Curran and Grattan is simply ridiculous. His sermons, though clear and manly and often eloquent, were not in the first style of the art. He had astonishing industry, no small genius, versatility almost unmatched, prodigious force of character, profound though narrow piety ;—and how was he rewarded ? By public and clerical neglect. Sir George Sinclair wrote me that he had again and again tried to move various admirers to take action in Croly's behalf, and had always failed. Nevertheless he was highly respected.

Going to hear him preach one Sabbath evening, and speaking to him at the close, he said he would have asked me to supper had it not been for some domestic circumstance. Little did I guess what that was, and I was amazed to hear it when I dined with him two days afterwards. He had that Sabbath buried his only daughter, a delightful girl of nine ; and yet had preached twice and never displayed by word or look or sign his feelings. Nor was this stoicism ; for his family all testify that he was a man of warm heart, and his son relates that he was unable



to preach for some time after. It was high principle and self-command.

13th June.—Read last evening and to-day a portion of Coleridge [notes on Shakespeare]. It is, as I expected, a shower of scattered gems, some of them very precious, but not many of them new. I hope to say more of parts of it afterwards. Meanwhile he is very unjust to his contemporaries, such as Southey, Scott, and Campbell. He thinks "Kehama," a work of great talent and ingenuity, but not of genius. Well! call it what you choose, it wields a most potent spell over the fancy, and the closing part is awfully and especially sublime. Scott's rhymed romances are not great poems, but they are so delightful that, in spite of Coleridge, the delight will overflow into other ages as it has already into all lands. But he specially under-rates Campbell when he speaks of him as a mere pretty and popular versifier. In exquisite morsels of beauty (like crumbs from the table of Heaven!) no poet, not Coleridge, nor Wordsworth, nor Shakespeare has surpassed Campbell. In general classic elegance and true taste he ranks with Horace and Virgil. His pathos in "O'Connor's Child" is profound; and he has a certain sober yet enthusiastic sublimity, as in "Lochiel's Warning," and "The Last Man," all his own. His misfortune was that he did not, like Scott, proceed after his early success to dig out new worlds of creation from the depths of his mind; but that arose from causes with which poor Coleridge could only too deeply sympathise. Bulwer, who knew Campbell well, speaks lately in *Blackwood* with the greatest admiration of his conversation as now and

then, in favourable circumstances revealing the real extent and riches of his mind. But he was sparing and slow in turning his bullion into circulating gold ; and hence the misapprehension so common as to the limitations of his genius.

*19th June.*—Went to Auchtermuchty Fast yesterday at 6 A.M. Hate these early risings in the raw morning. Preached on the “Virgins” and “Beloved now are we the sons of God.” The day became beautiful. The Lomond twins, after a short grand struggle with the morning mist gained on it, and basked in noon-day sunshine, which also bathed beautifully the glad green fat valley of the Eden with all its fields and groves. Met my old friend George Jeffrey, of Glasgow, and brought him with me here. We walked to Ladybank, four or five miles, and had a long confidential conversation about old friends and old times. George wears well, is full of hearty laughter, genial converse, and that kind of information which is got rather by travel and much mingling with society than by reading. He talked much in favour of the union, but did not convince me. . . . He is a man I warmly love, and who warmly loves me. He is a prodigious favourite with all my family circle. To-day he has left. I go to-morrow to Stirling to my brother’s sacrament.

*22nd June.*—Have come from Stirling. It was rather a pleasant visit. Went in the evening of Saturday to the Back Walk, and thence to the esplanade of the Castle. What a deluge of glory fell from that glowing west on the unrivalled landscape, the

blue giants of the Highlands circling in Rob Roy's country, Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi throwing out their forms boldly upon the valley, the bashful Ben Venue retiring behind, the Alps of Arrochar diminished in the far distance in the north-west into the likeness of blue toys, and in the north-east Ben Voirlich and Stuicknachroan looking as if they did not belong to Monteith at all, but were bending eastward their proud heads as if to say, "We are the guardians of Strathearn, which our western brethren do not see." On the other side were the links of Forth, turning and winding, reluctant to leave a scene so fair, while the green masses of the Ochils looked down calmly upon the intervolved struggle. It was an enrapturing scene, the loveliest of landscapes caught in its very brightest moment, and painted by the sun in his fairest colours. To-day has been windy and showery though warm. Had no enjoyment and not much feeling of any kind on the road homeward through heavy rain.

[On this occasion the old manuscript book with the essay on the "Covenanters," of which we have heard, was put into his hands.]

*24th June.*—Wrote eighty lines of "Night" yestreen, finishing the picture of Byron and commencing Shelley.

From my sermon on "Night" recently delivered, I may put down something here. After some general remarks on night as a season of darkness, sleep, dreams, silence; I said it was also the season of a great enduring and increasing Apocalypse—the revelation of the worlds and systems which fill immensity. Night after night the stars come forth, smiling and trembling in their loveliness, the everlasting brides-

maids of the happy sky. And not only so, they are multiplying to our sight as the ages roll on and the powers of the telescope are being increased. Night proclaims God's glory. Think how the variety and depth of the Divine resources are attested by the multitude of these orbs, and by the innumerable diversities of their construction and constitution. Think how His truth can be inferred from the regularity with which they rise and set, come and go, pursue their paths, "never resting, never hasting." If God's servants have been so faithful, how faithful must their Master be! . . . I spoke of the proof night gives of the greatness of man. That man as to his soul is not sprung from the ape, that he is made in the image of God, that from God he has come and to God is returning, and that his soul has the stamp of Divinity, need no other evidence than night. Other animals cower in terror below or look with lack-lustre eye up to the heavens. Man admires them, loves them, aspires to them, reads their history, discovers their laws, sings their glory, and upon the stars as upon unnumbered flaming altars presents his homage to God. Nay, man is taught by night to feel his soul so much greater than all the materialism of the universe that he refuses to worship it either in part or in whole, and will worship only the Great Spirit from whom it has sprung. Let no one think that in saying this I am unduly magnifying man. It is not man I magnify at all, it is the soul of man which in its better and higher nature is directly from God. Is it not written, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." And the magnitude and power of that spirit are nowhere seen to such advantage as in the mirror of midnight, and



man has never achieved greater triumphs than in his researches into the solemn mysteries and inexorable laws of the starry heavens.

In conclusion I spoke of night as an emblem and season of sin. Under its canopy walk abroad the children of evil, not deterred by darkness, not frightened by spectres, not solemnised by the heavy shadows, not spiritualised and softened by the shining stars. Were the canopy of night raised for but an hour by some supernatural hand, what sights and sounds of iniquity would be disclosed, and how would the moral beholders shudder and turn away ! And there was a day coming when it should be raised and the hidden things of darkness brought to light.

And then I spoke of the night being far spent, and the day being at hand. Our age was an age of doubt. Many were doubting everything, all were doubting something. But the morning twilight was, I trusted, to be followed by the rising of a day the loveliest, longest, and last, that should dawn on earth.

29th June.—See in the *Glasgow Citizen* extracts from A. Smith's new book, "Dreamthorp." They are clever, full of ingenious fancies, but want strength, body, and earnestness. Yet the *Citizen* compares him to Hazlitt and Lamb. His account of a lark rising from the foot of a scaffold, where two men were to be executed, is spoiled by affectation and over-doing. His picture of the imaginary Dreamthorp is very good. Smith has, undoubtedly, more genius than J. Brown (of "Rab and His Friends"), but neither of them will take a high, permanent rank as an essayist. Smith was best in his fresh, gushing,

youthful poetry. What rare delight I had, in 1851, perusing it in MS. Youth was, unquestionably, his Helicon, and he is travelling away from it every day, never, I think, to meet with a new fountain of equal richness or lustre.

5th July.—Finished an article on Spinoza for the *Christian Spectator* last Wednesday, and sent it off to London. It will not please the strait-laced, but will the thoughtful. Met some clerical brethren at Stirling. Old Pringle, of Newcastle, and MacKerrow, of Bridge of Teith, were there, the former a youth of eighty-four. MacKerrow's power of humour is hardly so strong as it used to be.

Finished this evening the book of my poem entitled "The Poets of Night." I have omitted Bailey and closed with Shelley, which, I think, is worthy of the theme. Find the book to consist of 1210 lines, about the average size of the books in the "Night Thoughts."

13th July.—The Rev. David Croom, of Edinburgh, has been here spending the day. He is a singularly manly and agreeable person, somewhere, I fancy, about fifty-three, but looks older. He has a great deal of heart, a good, sound, but not wide intellect, warm and healthy literary tastes, and a power of vigorous, effective, and sometimes impassioned, preaching. I heard him, twenty-seven years ago in Stirling, on Justification, and formed then my opinion of him as a first-rate preacher in his own style—clear, decisive, with a body of logic ending in a tail of practical

and piercing fire. I like him now best for his auld-world sympathies, his admiration of Strathearn divines of the past, especially of Jameson, of Methven, and his genial, manly manners.

Croom thinks that the Union is not at all popular with the United Presbyterian laymen, and that among them the chief resistance to it will be found. Laymen when out of, or perhaps sometimes most when in, clerical surveillance, see matters pretty clearly, and form tolerably sound deductions. Pity their education in our body is so much neglected! But truth is a mighty and subtle element, piercing all quarters. Blind-seeming often as heat, it is all-seeing as light, and must one day be the only atmosphere of thinking minds. And to dwell in the love of truth is to dwell in truth. \* The vestibule and the temple are one. The love of truth is, in one sense, more valuable than truth itself, because it is a moral quality, an individual excellency. Yet, how rarely is it met with! Cuvier told the late Dr. Knox that, among all the students who attended his classes and demonstrations, a prodigious number, he remembered only four or five who were actuated by a sincere and profound love for truth. When you talk to some persons of any one being consumed by a love of truth, the response is a laugh. And yet we see every day persons consumed by the love of man, by benevolence; and why not others by the love of truth? If ever man was, it was Arnold, and I think some of his school, such as Stanley and Jowett, have taken after him. Under the pressure of formulas and the fear of popular opinion, the love of truth is crushed, and this trampling down of a natural desire is confounded with humility. The Scottish thinker

"lets I dare not wait upon I would." He walks under the grim shadow of his Confession as under a thunder-cloud, ever looking up lest lightning should break out from it and consume him. Worse still are his solemn headshakings and awful whispered condemnations of all aberrations of thought. Hence the poor, lame, mindless cast of our religious literature, in which, instead of the exquisite elegance of Hall, the grave, bold energy of Foster, the reverent daring of Arnold, and the mixture of profound thought and poetic beauty in Robertson of Brighton, you have only such wretched pietistic drivel as these books, "Heaven our Home"; Guthrie's clever but overdone pictorialisms; Brown's heavy and lumbering commentaries; and Cunningham's strong but belated apologies for the indefensible and panegyrics on the dogmas of the past. Indeed, Scotland has hardly produced any great religious writer, although it has produced great preachers; nor can it, or England either, show one religious thinker to be compared to Schleiermacher the German. . . .

14th July.—Feel the heat to-day almost intolerable. Nothing like it, they say, since 1842. That was a miserable summer, on the whole, with me. I was astray in mind and heart. Agnes Vallentine was newly dead. My congregation was in poor plight, my spirits dull in general. And yet, I have joyful recollections connected with it, of victorious preachings, of one or two half-inspired hours at my desk, and, towards the close, of a delightful visit to Comrie, and of intercourse with Samuel Brown, though I remember writing to Aird that it had been the most



wretched summer I ever spent. What a benevolent provision, in looking back upon the past, to find that gloom has become gladness in the retrospect—even as a thunder-cloud looks beautiful as it floats away—and that the points of interest and enjoyment—such as a resplendent autumn eve, the writing of a passage of my “Gallery,” the sight of the Queen visiting her northern capital and of the blazing beacons which shone upon a hundred hills the evening before to announce her approach; a conversation with a gifted man from Edinburgh, as we walked in the Magdalen Green one heavenly October evening; a vision I saw at Milnathort; a walk I had home from Pitrodie, where poor Thomas Nicol was lying on that bed from which he never rose; the hearing the Alchymist describe the annihilation of the universe in a lecture at the Watt Institution; a visit to the monument at Comrie during the death of the autumn, perhaps the loveliest autumn I ever beheld; the visiting of the Watt exhibition, and the sight of a picture, Christ and the woman of Samaria, which moved and melted me as picture never did before or since—these, and a number of other spots of light, stand out amidst the darkness of the year and are for ever cherished in my memory and heart.

*15th July.*—Wrote yesterday some fifty lines of “Night.” Summer and autumn evenings are, I think, most propitious to poetry which aims at no second flight. I continue to feel undiminished enthusiasm for the subject.

No news from America to-day. The weather rather cloudy and not quite so hot. Am going to

West Ferry for a sea bath. Well do I remember, some fifteen years ago, returning from bathing in the sea, and finding a copy of "Festus" from the author waiting me, and my gladness thereat.

Enjoyed my dip. The sky has become cloudier, with a fresh pleasant easterly breeze, the yellow rayless sun, the very quintessence of heat, sailing behind yet visible all through the clouds. I was struck with the peculiar redness of the reflected light upon the ocean and the house walls and doors. The feeling this evening is nearly autumnal, the most delightful feeling nature can bestow, suggesting—

"Joy beyond the name of pleasure,  
Deep self-possession and intense repose."

No demon would ever have dreamed of creating spring or autumn. These are two perpetual pledges of a happy futurity to mankind.

*17th July.*—Have got a short note from Logan. He seems environed in his quarrels with the League. Glad to have heard from him.

This day bright but breezy. There have been two frosty mornings, and all things portend an early autumn and an abundant harvest. Visited eight or nine families in Lochee yesterday. Saw my old opponent Young of Ellon's "Sermons" lying in the house of one of them. Remembered how savagely I lashed it in 1849. It has a preface by Dr. Young, of Perth, which I likened, I remember, to an old prophet introducing his ass. This was rather severe. Young [of Ellon] was a man of ability, but dark and envious. His book, which was posthumous, did not

sell, and hence I was amazed to see a copy of it in a poor man's house in this neighbourhood.

*19th July.*—Preached twice to-day, in the forenoon on Solomon's fall, in a quiet vein. In the afternoon I was nearer the mark on the words, "When Christ who is your life shall appear," &c. An old sermon, as far back as 1839, but, as I do not always do with old sermons, gave it with freshness and force. Spoke of Christ as our Life, the Source of all life, animal, spiritual, celestial; of His first appearance—the source of life in a babe and dying on a cross; of His second coming, its *when* unknown, its *how* unknown, its consequences wonderful, "Ye shall appear with Him in glory." I painted His appearance; His brow the placid marble, His eye the fiery flame, His form the ideal grace and beauty, darkness that might be felt behind Him, light ineffable and full of glory above and around Him, and beneath Him devouring fire; but owned that all this was conjecture. We were to appear with Him. It were much to appear with Him in disgrace, darkness, and shame; but we were to appear with Him in glory. The primitive martyrs appeared with Him in fire, the Waldenses in blood—what time the bloody Piedmontese threw mother with infant down the rocks—and the Covenanters in wretched rags and poverty; but the people of God were to appear with Him in glory.

*20th July.*—Heard from Aird this morning. He is about to visit his native district. He greatly commends Waddell's "Discourses" which I have not read

in whole. From parts, however, I think Waddell is far from a satisfying writer, and that his resources are not equal to the position he has assumed. In reply, I tell Aird about my poem on "Night," and speak of it with considerable confidence.

21st July.—Newspapers filled with details of the horrible butcheries in America.

- Go out to Newtyle to-day for a few hours. Still no proofs nor letters. Must learn to "wait" as well as "labour."

22nd July. — Was delighted with Strathmore, especially with Schiehallion. I never saw him stand out more boldly. It seemed an *alias* of Atlas, a pillar bearing up the blue arch of heaven. And what a wave of green spread out below with thousands of fringing woods. To-day has brought us some gentle dropping rains.

Revs. H. MacGill and G. Jeffrey here last night. I read them "Pilatus" and a good deal of "Night." Both professed much pleasure, and think it my best production. We had three good hours' discussion of the Colenso question. I find them not dogmatic but timid. I was sorry to differ from such lovable and intelligent men. They want a new and sound theory of inspiration in the first place—construction to go before demolition. I want demolition first and then construction. Of course, if the demolisher works under some constructive idea, he will more effectually gain even his negative purpose. But even without these he may do good.



*25th July.*—Jeffrey left yesterday. He and I argued rather much and warmly ; yet I like him better the longer I know him. He is a most kindly man, perhaps a little too much given, as he says, to weigh and measure character instead of coming at it intuitively.

My brother tells me that there are two classes of opinion about me among the ministers of our body, some being very warm admirers, others bitter opponents. The former class includes, besides my personal friends, many of the younger and more progressive spirits. The others are many of the old and soberly orthodox, who do not like the privilege I claim of acting and speaking for myself. Well, be it so. It is not possible to please all parties, and to give offence is perhaps one severe condition of telling truth.

The proof of "Spinoza" has just come in. It is true, and moderately written ; but, as I said before, won't please all parties or probably any.

*26th July.*—Preached twice, nervously animated in the forenoon, quiet in the afternoon. Lectured on the revolt of the Ten Tribes. I said that almost all revolts were successful—that of the Dutch, of the Puritans, &c., and so probably would be that of the Southern States. Ay, and so, hitherto, is that of man against his Maker. In the afternoon I preached on "It is good for a man to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord," which I applied, first, to affliction. I said the main duties under affliction were the main cures for it, patience and hope ; and how often I wished a shower of these two graces to descend on our large infirmary in this town, and on

the vast infirmary we call the earth. Secondly, to the position of many worthy men in society, poor, struggling, kept down, while quacks were coining money, villains seizing power, and impudent pretenders monopolising fame. Let such honest men, however, persevere; let them just go on and some unseen path would open among the hills. If not successful themselves, they might become successful in their children. At all events life was short, and, if good men, there were before them durable riches and righteousness. Thirdly, to the case of friends who were in the gall of bitterness. Men prayed and laboured long for such, till they began to blame God and to give up their efforts. God was not to be blamed. He does not, cannot, speaking reverently, compel men to be good against their will. Let us persevere in our efforts and leave the result to Him. Fourthly, to the doubt and darkness of the day. We were not to back out from these into Popery, but to wait and hope, assured that all the vitalities of our faith would endure. And finally, to the prospects of the church. God would yet build up Zion in His own time, and we must wait, work, and hope.

*27th July.*—Enjoyed much my ride to the Ferry yester-eve. As night advanced saw the Plough shining in the north-west heaven with great glory. That as the signal of approaching autumn is always to me an inspiring sight. Gave my sermon on the Congregation of the Dead to a very crowded house. I shall set down one or two passages.

“What is truth?” said Pilate to Christ, and went out without waiting a reply. There is another question which, perhaps, had Pilate asked, he would have

waited for an answer ; and that he could not have asked of a more competent oracle than the Lord of life—the question, What is death ? What means that strange, awful, and universal collapse in the animal economy, nay, to all appearance in the spiritual system too, which we call death ? What is death ? I have asked over the grave ; but there was no reply save the rattling of the earth upon the coffin lid. I described the congregation of the dead as, first, a vast congregation ; secondly, a scattered yet united congregation ; thirdly, as silent ; fourthly, as bound by an oath of secrecy to reveal nothing they know within the sanctuary of death ; fifthly, a congregation of varied character ; sixthly, an increasing congregation ; and seventhly, as one yet to be disturbed, awakened, raised, and divided.

In conclusion, I said there was much in these meditations among the tombs to induce sad and melancholy thoughts. I often had felt that the sight of a large multitude, at first a cheerful becomes by-and-by a dreary spectacle. The same thought which is said to have brought tears to the eyes of Xerxes when he saw his millions of men and reflected that in a few years they would be all no more, arises in a minor degree and comes the more chillingly over you when you remember that you must die with them. The great mystery of being, too, appears then in a magnified and darkened form. Why were men such as these ever created ? Why was such an exquisite machinery as man's body, and such a brilliant energy as man's soul ever permitted to subserve mean purposes, to be stained by selfishness and rotted by sin, and at last to sink down in utter destruction. Lord, what is man ? is an inquiry which arises with

startling force. A sense, too, of personal insignificance springs up; salutary, perhaps, but not at all agreeable. We ask, what are we among so many? And how much more forcibly would such feelings oppress us could we realise the countless millions included in the congregation of the dead! In such a case nothing but the Christian hope, ay, and that hope infused into our minds anew as by a strong breath from heaven, could reassure and restore us.

*29th July.* — Followed poor Dr. Glen's remains to-day a portion of the way to the cemetery. He was always a silent man, spoke in short sentences or monosyllables, and his real thought came through his eyes. He was devoted to his profession, and when I saw the faces of the poor and of patients, many of them bathed in tears, surrounding his hearse as it moved away from the Infirmary, I said—"That is true fame."

*31st July.*—A day of tremendous heat, which has made me slightly bilious. Let me try, however, how I can deal with "Night."

But first let me record this little incident. The Rev. Mr. M'Gregor, of Picton, Nova Scotia, son of an old friend of my father's, called to-day. A pleasant man he seems. Talking of Longfellow's "Evangeline," he questioned its truth, and asserted that the Catholics so tenderly pictured there were deservedly expelled for intriguing with the Jesuits. I referred to Burke, who declares that they were extirpated for "pretexts which no honest man could think worth



one farthing ;” and who speaks of this “poor, innocent, deserving people, whom our utter inability to govern or to reconcile gave us no sort of right to extirpate.” I told him that Grosart of Kinross [now Dr. Grosart of Blackburn] while in America collected a quantity of documents on the subject, a list of which he sent me in 1852-53, urging me to found a history upon them. For this I had not time then, and I had not heard of the matter since. M’Gregor said that other documents had been recently discovered setting the subject in a new light. I advised him to write or speak to Grosart about it. I should be loath to lose my belief not only in the worth but in the credibility of that fine poem.

*1st August.* — Another glorious day, with torrid sunshine, but cool and fluctuating winds. I love August. This day, three years ago, it came upon me amidst the wilds of Norway, having just left, the day before, the magnificent Romsdal valley. That wild Horn still stands up before my imagination.

I have just repulsed a poor, wandering beggar, evidently a wreck, somewhat too roughly. To be sure he broke in on my Saturday evening privacy, and, my wife being out, I had no money to give him. Still, may God forgive me! one has no right to add roughness to refusal. That poor, old, forlorn, faded certificate he showed me, if it awakened a thought of justice, should have also awakened feelings of compassion and charity. A tall Pole called upon me a few days ago, also begging, although covering it over with the offer of some pamphlet in exchange. I gave him a few shillings, which he accepted thankfully, and,

unlike many in similar plight, without looking to see how much. While I was out of the room, he rushed instinctively to a piano and executed some masterly measures. He told me he knew Garibaldi, and expressed strong admiration of a photograph of him which a sailor had brought me from Italy.

*2nd August.*—This day, seventeen years ago, I saw in the interval of public worship a veritable Oriental whirlwind. It is described in the “Bards of the Bible” (chapter on Job) to the letter. It was an emblem, but too lively, of the then state of my mind, and I beheld it “with a stern delight and strange.” I remember lecturing that evening on the Interpreter’s House in Bunyan. This day has not heat or energy to create a storm of any kind. It is hot, but the warmth is kissed away by the cool, easterly breeze.

Lectured on the revolt of the Ten Tribes a second time, and spoke of Jeroboam’s caricature of the Jerusalem service at Dan and Bethel. In the afternoon I preached with great liberty on the words, “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” I said—first, there was an inheritance reserved for us; secondly, it was absolutely secure—a possession; thirdly, it was purchased; fourthly, it was not yet fully redeemed; and fifthly, we had in the Holy Spirit of promise an earnest of it. Under the first particular, I said that it was not a good thing in general for men to be born to an inheritance. The best inheritance of most men lay in their own right hands. Nor would the Christian be better, but worse

of his prospect, were it not that ere he can hope to gain it he must gain qualifications for it in faith, humility, and true manly holiness. And what was it? Paul said the truth in calling it "unutterable." Scripture gave only a sketch or map, not a picture of it. Here I alluded to a story Mr. M'Gregor (who was in the church) had told me. His father in Picton had a map of Scotland, and used, with tears in his eyes, to point out to his children the place whereabouts lay the dear loch of his childhood. So we had only a map of our distant home, not a coloured picture. I said it was purchased. God might have set us free, and not made us rich. If you simply freed a colony of slaves you just changed them into beggars, or, at least, into poor, hard-working men. We paid £20,000,000 for our slaves in 1834. Had we given them, besides, each a farm or an estate it would have beggared Britain. But Christ by His blood not only set us free, but endowed us with boundless wealth. Again, of the "earnest," I said it was small, indeed—of heaven's light just a mere chink—of heaven's love just a mere spark—of heaven's peace just one leaf of the palm—of heaven's holiness just one shred of the fine linen robe—of heaven's harmony one note of the great song—of heaven's joy one drop of the river of pleasures—of heaven's glory one ray of the crown. But it was large compared with all the joys and glories of this earth.

*3rd August.*—Am reading Robinson Crusoe, first time for many years. It is like coming home, after long absence, to the house where you spent your boyhood. How pleasing yet pensive the feeling; the delight, however, predominating.

What a mercy that man in this world must work ! Were he not working he would weep continually. But working he forgets to weep, nay, wrings a stern joy out of the universe and compels his severe step-mother to bless him.

I saw the moon the other evening in a striking light. She hung broad, round, and red in the south-east, with a few thin flakes of dark cloud across her disk, which served to bring out very strongly her depth in the sky, her magnitude, and her glory. And so it is, I thought, with the shadows resting upon great men, upon great events, ay, and with those which rest upon Thy countenance, O Great God, that "hidest Thyself." They act as foils to, and they increase the conception of transcendent excellence. In my prayer yesterday afternoon I described an altar erected even in heaven to the "Unknown God," steaming up there to the infinite eternal darkness which is the canopy above. Yet it is remarkable that the same chapter in Isaiah which contains the words, "Verily thou art a God that hidest Thyself," contains the sentence, "Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth." Through the darkness we catch glimpses of light that come from a furnace of Divine love, which is the very heart of God. The sun is light ; but we see from breaks in the light that there is darkness within. God is darkness ; but we see from breaks in the darkness that there are light and love within. Yet, in one sense, God shall always remain darkness, since the Infinite can never reveal itself fully to the finite.

*4th August.*—Wrote a few more lines of "Night"



in the evening. Autumn eves are coming on and should be propitious. It is long since Thomson cried,

“Inspiring autumn comes.”

He rose on it like a fat partridge on a brisk September breeze.

My great deficiency as a writer is in *quiet*, and the husbanding of my thoughts and images. Nor am I gaining this even in maturing life so steadily as I could wish. What power lies often in a quiet touch, a suggestive hint, a whisper! I felt this while reading to-day that wonderful picture in Robinson Crusoe of the man's foot upon the shore. Had it been a full-length impression of the Horned Devil it would not have exerted a tithe of the power. It was simply a man's footprint, not his own. It is a Shakespearean touch, nay, I know not if Shakespeare himself has any one thing so Shakespearean in all his writings. From that foot what a gigantic structure of fear and conjecture does the poor fellow's imagination proceed to pile up! What painter shall give us his countenance when, as a last resort, he measures the foot by his own and finds it longer? His first feeling was that of stupefied surprise, this of dreadful certainty. My place, if I have any, in the future of literature will not be with the great simple writers, such as Scott and Defoe, but with the profuse, gorgeous, somewhat reckless ones, like Young, Burke, Shelley, Hazlitt—with them, although on a lower shelf, and much further down than nature designed me to be. This, I say (and Samuel Brown, who of all men best understood my intellect, was of the same opinion) with perfect frankness and fearlessness.

5th August.—This day still hot, but with some wind and passing clouds. I am to have a drive to Carnoustie to-morrow with a few friends.

Called on my old door-keeper, James Macleod, who is in a feeble state. He is a man of considerable intelligence, now above seventy, and frail in the limbs, but otherwise pretty well preserved. He has been reading Longfellow's poems and thinks he has "lofty flichts." He asked if Longfellow had been a Papist, and was astonished to learn that he was or had once been a Unitarian. He gave me a present of an old copy of Hunter's Horace, which he had bought but found he could not read.

It is now nearly a year since a Mr. Appleton, a brother-in-law of Longfellow, called on me with a note from his celebrated relative. He was a pleasant young man and had become, owing to the war solely, a flaming abolitionist. I asked what ministers he had heard in Edinburgh, and whether he had been to Guthrie's chapel. "No, he had no interest in Guthrie. He had gone to hear the two Edinburgh clergymen at present most talked of in the States, Dean Ramsay and A. K. H. B."

How envious the chance medleys of fame! The Nova Scotian, M'Gregor, had read Dodds' "Covenanters," and was delighted to see and to hear him speaking here the other evening, but he had never heard of Aird, a vastly superior man. And so the American had heard of, and longed to hear A. K. H. B., and had a contempt for Guthrie, and probably knew nothing about John Bruce. I prefaced an edition of Longfellow in 1849, and since then he has kept up a friendly intercourse by occasional correspondence. Professor Nichol met him when in America and

described him as a very kindly person. I wrote my preface to Longfellow in the close of the delightful autumn of 1848, and the memory of the reading for and writing it is one of my most charming yet pensive reminiscences.

Glanced over some of my papers in the *Scottish Review*. I notice two of them as among the best I ever did, namely: "Satire and Satirists," and "Macaulay as a Historian." So Aird thought too. What a mass of papers of mine lie in periodicals. I have sometimes thought a selection of single thoughts and images from them would be popular, the rubbish being omitted "by special desire."

*7th August.*—Enjoyed the jaunt to Carnoustie very considerably. The setting of the sun was very fine, and as we rode home the coming out of the stars one by one was exceedingly beautiful. The sky last night was clear and almost cloudless. But this morning a fine, still, rich shower has fallen, and nature is looking quite bride-like.

*8th August.*—Have weeded out some thirty lines of "Night." I am determined in such an effort to spare no pains for its polishing.

White wrote me yesterday. He says, "The Christian public here are a little mad about your paper on Spinoza, but the Christian public here are very easily put mad." Precisely as I expected. Mr. Cook is astonished at this, as he thinks the paper cautious and mild. But in London they are at present desperately sensitive. They will neither go to the light nor let

the light come to them. Unless light comes to some men as supernaturalism they will not accept it, and they hiss it away. Christianity is in danger of becoming what Foster denied it was in his time, "the religion of weak minds." God forbid that this should ever be the fate of my dear old mother faith!

*9th August.*—Another day of great heat. Lectured in the forenoon on Jeroboam's withered hand. In the afternoon preached on, "If any man thirst let him come." Spoke first of the strong desire in all hearts for truth, peace, immortality, happiness; secondly, of the impossibility of gratifying this on earthly objects; thirdly, of the gratification provided in the gospel, not full, but growing; and fourthly, of the freeness and amplitude of the offer. I said in the course of the sermon that if we searched the Bible for information on natural history and philosophy we should just find the ideas of the age, neither more nor less. "Heaven's joy is too large to enter any human heart at present; the heart would burst or shrivel up. Some churches would not permit the full free doctrine of the atonement to be preached, but ours, I trust, is different. In proportion to the pain of any appetite is the delight in its gratification; and so the more earnest we are in seeking after truth and spiritual happiness, the greater ultimately will be our satisfaction."

Felt a little nervous in the forenoon, having scarcely slept since four in the morning. These sleepless mornings occur occasionally and are not pleasant. Oh these tossings to and fro till the dawning of the day, even though you are perfectly well! What miserable recollections and vexing thoughts come in



crowds unbidden and will not depart. Each morning is penal, and you feel yourself the Prometheus of the pillow. I often repeat poetry, particularly verses like Shelley's *Cloud*, with many recurring rhymes, to soothe myself to slumber, but often in vain.

*11th August.*—Intend starting this evening for the Highlands, returning by Wednesday week. We go to Perth to-night, to Inverness to-morrow, thence to Skye or Glencoe, and come back by Oban, Dalmally, and Glasgow. The weather is promising, warm yet breezy. The route offers grand attractions.

*19th August.*—Returned last night at eight, having, although with some drawbacks, enjoyed myself exceedingly. We left this on the afternoon of Tuesday the 11th, and spent the night at Perth. Early next morning we took rail for Pitlochry and breakfasted there. Enjoyed a walk near that place along the banks of the Garry. Mounted the Highland coach and started for Inverness. The road is dreary in some parts; but the sight in the distance of Laggan, the *umquhile* residence of Mrs. Grant, where she wrote her "Letters from the Mountains"—of the Monadhliath range, where fell the almost supernatural rains which brought on the Moray floods in 1829 (I remember being that day and night in Muthill, Perthshire, and never saw such a scowling sky ere the storm came on, or witnessed such a tempest of fire and water afterwards)—and of Belleville, where Ossian MacPherson lived and has a monument erected to him—all this was interesting. But I found what was

more attractive still, in the sight of the Cairngorm range of mountains. It rises above a flat but forest-clad region, like an island from the sea. Its tops are not peaked, or shattered, or bold, but are folded up and massed together, and have an air of proud isolation and defiance, as if conscious that Ben Nevis alone overtopped their highest hill, Ben Macdhui, and were not quite satisfied that even he was superior. Through their midst runs a magnificent opening or gash indicating the path to Braemar, which must be one of the wildest in Scotland. Ben Macdhui was not visible, but I saw Cairngorm distinctly enough, and thought on the lines of a forgotten poet :—

“Where the eagle comes forth on the wings of the storm,  
And her young ones are rocked on the high Cairngorm.”

The forest region is Rothiemurchus ; and it is in it Wilson lays the scene of the latter portion of his glorious “Glance at Selby’s Ornithology,” with its fine *overturn*, “On, on, on, further into the forest.” My soul sprang through that gash to the Linn of Dee and Lochnagar. The night became bitterly cold, and we were all glad to reach the hotel in Inverness. In the morning got to Dingwall and set out by coach for Auchnasheen, an inn half way between Dingwall and Loch Maree. Enjoyed this ride much. Strathpeffer richly beautiful, and the rest of the road wild and striking. Passed through a little wood of birches, extremely fine. Saw some hovels upon the grounds of the Earl of Ashburton, surely the most wretched in the world. Every one of them was dilapidated and seemed going to pieces. This wanted one of its chimneys, another the half of its roof, a third seemed sinking into the ground. Yet through every one of

them a cheerful blue smoke was rising, and the faces of the inhabitants at their doors were ruddy and healthful, and we began to question if they were not happier than the inmates of palaces.

At Auchnasheen we had the first glimpse of the mountains of Loch Maree. One of them, Ben Eay, has here a most imposing aspect, grand, collected in his might, portly, and commanding. We passed Loch Risque, the green banks of it faithfully given in the mirror of its waters. At Kinlochewe the scene was striking; on the left was Ben Eay, with its sharp ridges and precipices of a ghastly white; farther on, on the northern side of the lake, another mountain began to assert his sovereignty and to claim our unbounded admiration. This was Ben Sleogh or Sligach, the real lord of the loch. He rises almost sheer up from the water, and on the top assumes a castellated form; nature proudly anticipating and surpassing art. A multitude of rocky spikes are rounded into architectural unity about his summit. Every step you traverse westward his aspect becomes more sublime, till at last, amid the shadows of the advancing eve, you might fancy him a visible god—so great is his soar, so independent his attitude, so dignified his bearing. On the south rise fine wooded cliffs, and below expands the loch, gemmed with islands, and surmounted on the north-west by a wall of perpendicular rock. But all these seem only the accessories or foils to the mountain monarch. Yet on his left he has rivals in those strange peaks surrounding Loch Torridon, which look over on you with startling suddenness, precipitous as the sky, barren as the African desert, and wearing the sun's last smile like glory gilding hopeless ruin. You

cross the shoulder of a hill, and all is lost. But other of the Torridon peaks become visible, and when night falls and hides them you find yourself descending a half-seen wooded gorge, with a stream exasperating into a cataract and wailing through the gloom. Farther down are thicker woods opening upon the ocean, and you gain your timely inn at the head of the Gairloch.

By steamer next day we came down to Portree, lying in its little well-sheltered nook, and, going ashore, had the satisfaction of spending one minute on the soil of Skye. Through the Sound of Mull we reached Oban, and thence went up to Balachulish. The weather was showery, but now and then it brightened. Once I saw the sunlight smiling on the Black Rock of Glencoe, and again a little fragment of a rainbow appeared in the opening of the gorge, smiled and retreated, as if to say, "Follow me! follow me!" Next day, accordingly, we did follow the beautiful meteor into the ghostly valley. We had seen Glencoe twice before, both times in sunshine. But now we were to see it in mist, as gloomy Glencoe; and fine was the spectacle, on the left hand of the jagged needles of rock, scarcely seen, transpiercing the clouds, and on the right of the Black Crag, with its turban of mist above and Ossian's Cave below; of the Three Sisters vieing with each other in frowning majesty; of the Shepherd of the Glen, steep-rising and bold, but with his far-seeing eye slightly shaded with a gauzy veil. But we missed some of the peaks, pinnacles, rocky walls, and snow-filled clefts which had struck us under the brilliant sunshine of other years. It seemed Glencoe abridged, mutilated, shorn, although still unspeakably grand and awful. Whether in sun-



shine or storm, Glencoe is always the "Only one"—the secluded, self-involved, solemn, silent valley. Green covers the lower part of its cliffs, but it seems the green of the grave. Its sounds are in league with silence, its light is the ally of darkness. And yet the feeling produced is not, as Macaulay would tell us, terror; it is pensiveness; and if the glen be the "valley of the shadow of death," it is death without his sting, the everlasting slumber there, but the horrors fled.

Leaving Glencoe is like leaving a separate world, or coming down from a God-haunted Sinai. And what a striking contrast between its towering heights and the flat desolations which surround King's House. Yet these, by their very magnitude, become sublime. Infinite desolation affects you, as all infinitudes do, with amazement and a dreary joy. We descended Glenfalloch and were delighted with its green, soft aspect and its bickering waterfalls. Yesterday morning we crossed the hills between Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine, and so by the Trossachs to Callander. We saw altogether, with the exception of Loch Awe and Coruisk in Skye, the very finest scenes in all Scotland.

*22nd August.*—Wrote yestreen some fifty or sixty lines of "Night." Have gone over the Moon, Mars, Bootes, the Great Bear, Saturn, and Jove. Have yet, besides others, Orion, the Cross, and the Milky Way to accomplish.

No hour in all my recent journey did I enjoy more than a quiet walk to the Brig of Turk. It is to me a most interesting spot. The river comes down from

green and purple Glenfinlas, and below the bridge flows on in a deep yet bright current, with the noble Ben Venue looking down at it from the west. The sun was bright, the hills serene, the stream pure and lustrous. All was calm. I was alone, and my musings were pensively delightful. I remembered being there in 1831, in the company of poor Donald MacCall, a youth commemorated in the "History of a Man," and long since dead. I seemed still to see his tight little erect form, so full of Highland *vis* and consequence, walking beside me. We spent a night at his mother's, on the banks of Loch Lubnaig, and I remember describing to him, while in bed, in very poetic mood, the character and fate of Judas, in a style I could not now in conversation equal. Next morning we climbed Ben Ledi, and were there at ten A.M.\* What a summer of delight and of seeming power that of 1831 was! The autumn, too, at the hall in Glasgow was, on the whole, delightful. A purer or a more enthusiastic youth did not then breathe. But, by-and-by, I found that I could not live on dreams.

*23rd August.*—It is exactly twenty-eight years to-day since I preached my first sermon as a probationer in the School Wynd Church. I preached that day, in the forenoon, on the Rich Man and Lazarus, in the afternoon on "What is Man?" and in the evening on "Awake, O Sword! against my Shepherd."

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\* The rest of this journey is detailed in the "History of a Man," p. 24.

*10th September, 1863.*—Since the 23rd of August nothing very special has occurred ; yet there have been things of some little interest to myself. Preached on Sabbath the 30th in Edinburgh. Audiences encouraging, forenoon crowded, afternoon overflowing, evening inaccessible. My friend Gardiner had to sit on the collection plate holding his wife on his knee ; not an unpleasing position certainly.

To my great wonder found Craig still extant. He looks pale, thin, with a long grey beard. He has lots of letters of mine and of [Samuel] Brown's, and is anxious, in case of his being taken off, that they should be published entire. Poor fellow ! his presence and talk brought up the past so vividly. He hinted to me that although Brown's spirit had become more childlike, his convictions were at the last the same as they had ever been. Can believe this ; yet on some accounts I regret Craig's statement.

Yesterday was the great day of the opening of the Baxter Park. It was certainly a splendid sight. The view from the platform of the gathering throngs under the bright September day was very imposing. The speeches, as usual on such occasions, were inaudible. The provost's speech in the hall, when presenting the freedom to Earl Russell, was in excellent taste and gracefully given. Lord John wears well. I saw all that was good in the history of Whiggery represented in him, and honoured him accordingly.

*11th September, 1863.*—Wrote at "Night" yestreen, describing meteors, and that monster one especially which in August, 1783, was seen by George Crabbe. This, I think, I did well.

A brother minister in town prayed, it is said, last Sabbath, that the day of the opening of the park might be a bad one. My prayer was "that it might be sanctioned by God's sun, guarded by His grace, and followed by His blessing." The antithesis between the two prayers, the fine day following, is causing some amusement in town.

*14th September, 1863.*—I preached in the afternoon shortly but with unusual freedom on the "Tree of Life." Gardiner in the forenoon gave a good, practical and, toward the close, impressive sermon on the words, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever." Enjoyed afterwards the ride to Newtyle. A large audience. Preached on "Infant Salvation." The Strath glorious. What a week, nearly, of divine autumn days has been shining. It recalls 1848. Gardiner away this evening. He is really a fine fellow, with exuberant spirits and excellent powers, although not quite up to the age. What a field Edinburgh or Glasgow presents now for a real Age-preacher. But where is he?

*15th September, 1863.*—Was at Longforgan to-day at the funeral of a child. The father's grief is great, but he consoles himself by the hope of infant salvation. He told me of a parent who had lost four, and whose grief is aggravated by his belief that infants may be, and probably are, lost for ever. Met a curious specimen, a man, eighty-nine years of age, who appears seldom to have had one thought above the clods, to which he is now reluctantly bending. Dr. R.



was once pressing him about his soul, when he broke in and said: "Eh, man! when I was young we used to sit drinking till it was three in the morning. It was fine fun." R. gave him up in despair.

16th September, 1863.—I have got and read part of a synopsis of Rénan in *Public Opinion*. It is very much as I expected, a *résumé* in a pictorial and biographical shape of all the Rationalistic objections to Christ's character as *the* "Son of God," although admitting Him to be *a* son of God.

A startling part is his brief compendium of the evidence against the genuineness of John's Gospel. I do not know if any one has ever fully grappled with the question as to how and by whom the speeches and parables of Christ were preserved. Mark and Luke undoubtedly had them at second-hand; and in John, Christ's style and manner are most marvellously changed. Perhaps the alteration of plan and view attributed to Christ by Rénan may to some extent account for the change. But the difficulty is that the last words of Christ in John are intensely spiritual, while those in the Synoptists are as unquestionably Chiliastic. My present notion is that a sublime genius, considerably far down in the Christian era, bearing the relation to Christ that Plato did to Socrates, although not probably Christ's personal disciple, finding that the Chiliastic promises were slow of being realised, went back to the first programme of Christ, and upon these and floating traditions and the growing Platonic spirit and speculations of his age, founded an independent gospel. But I cannot say that my mind is on these, or a

hundred similar points, at all made up. It is possible that John may have furnished one of his followers with some facts and traits for the gospel. There is a sad uncertainty over the whole subject, and dogmatism on either side is but a name for blustering doubt. Rénan writes in a tolerably good spirit, and the burning of his book in many places on the Continent is simply disgraceful, and tells of the cowardly Jesuitism which passes there for Christianity. The reducing, however, by Colenso, Rénan, and others, of Scripture to a kind of palimpsest with continual erasures, alterations, interlineations, additions, and suppressions made in the course of ages, tends greatly to lower its aggregate value and veracity. Perhaps, after we get rid of the merely human element, the Divine truth and poetic beauty will shine forth in greater glory.

The weather is truly autumnal now ; and the fire rekindled on the hearth "like a reappearing star" has a delightful effect.

*17th September, 1863.*—Finished the second book of "Night." It is shorter, and perhaps not quite so interesting as the seventh on the "Poets of Night," but does not, I think, fall beneath the mark. Glanced yesterday at Kingsley's "Miscellanies." His judgments on Byron and Shelley as poets are most unjust. Tennyson is his idol. He talks of Shelley being "girlish," &c., which was not the case. Childlike is a far truer epithet. He was to the end an impassioned and inspired child, and this is perhaps as good as "muscular Christian." Again, what Kingsley says about his exquisite lines written in dejection at

Naples, is absolutely contemptible. Altogether, I begin to think Kingsley destitute of true taste, a very narrow pre-Raffaelite. I believe he prefers "Auld Robin Gray" to the sixth Book, ay, even the close of the sixth Book of "Paradise Lost." I remember Masson trying to bolster him up as superior to Scott in description, very unsuccessfully. Kingsley strips truth of all the illusions of distance, and leaves it naked; Scott knows that the blue given by the evening air to the mountain is a portion of its true appearance, and as true and everlasting as the grey granite it turns out to be on a nearer approach.

18th September, 1863.—Felt yesterday forenoon, while writing, more of the "joy of harvest," the old, autumnal inspiration, than any time this season or for several seasons past. What a golden feeling were it but to last! But a thousand circumstances spring up like weeds and choke the grain, especially in a man of such various moods as I.

19th September, 1863.—Dined at the Ferry yesterday. Rather pleasant party. Mr. H. [Howatt?] and some others were sounding me about the Union and urging me to join it. Others, of the Independents, were taking a different view, and hinting that I might do worse than join them. We shall see.

Have just heard after a long silence from Burleigh. He must be a good fellow, as he sends me his annual present, a box of Portuguese plums and onions. "They're a' guid that gi'es." How different from others I could name who have *succeeded*, partly through me. And perhaps this, so strange is human nature,

accounts for the difference. Men above the ladder often kick it down ; men on it do not, and cannot.

*20th September, 1863.*—Lectured to-day, opening the great bay of Elijah's history. It is a magnificent episode in the Book of Kings. I quoted Rénan, who says that if Elijah had come out in France he would never have got the length of the outer gate of the Tuileries, and added that if in England he would have been put in prison ere he got an audience of the Queen. In the afternoon preached on "The harvest is plenteous." Speaking of the heathen world I said I did not regard it as a vast unmitigated scene of perdition. It is rather an enormous, very ill-taught, Ragged School.

*21st September 1863.*—Read all Chalmers' "Astronomical Discourses" after supper yestreen, partly with a view for "Night." My impressions of it are confirmed. Its worst passages hurry on nearly as much as its best. Though only of noisy mud, they constitute a cataract of that element, and are irresistible. Altogether, it is a curiosity among books, and as such, secure of immortality.

Browning, of Tillicoultry (a remarkable man I may describe afterwards), once flattered me very highly by saying that the only three volumes he ever read at a sitting were my "First Gallery," Paterson's prize essay on Athens, and Chalmers' "Astronomical Discourses."

*22nd September, 1863.*—Wrote at "Night" glowingly and with ease, some fifty lines. I am just now



on the discoveries of Galileo. While reading Chalmers was struck with his Babylonish dialect, and then began to remember how many Scotch writers have the same taint. Think of Carlyle, Sir John Leslie, Irving, Allan Cunningham, Wilson, Aird, G. G. ! Not one of these has a style approaching the classical ; all indulge in *splendida vitia*, and are rather faulty in construction.

Only Scott, Jeffrey, and Campbell can be called pure writers. Lockhart is not, though he sins less than the rest. Hence the non-acceptance of many of our writers in England. The reason I suspect lies in the hybrid of Scotch and English which our conversation used to be, in the neglect of early training in English composition which was once the great fault of Scottish colleges and schools, and perhaps in the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*. Up to the first third of this century, our Scottish authors were in reality echoes of the English, with the exception of Burns. The torrent of the Scottish mind has only of late burst out in power, and wherever there is young power there is efflorescence and a degree of turbulence. With the exception of Scott, however, such barbarians and Scythians as Chalmers, Irving, Carlyle, Wilson, and Burns, are the greatest men we have had.

23rd September, 1863.—Slept soundly last night, with a thousand queer dreams, however. What a strange thing is a dream. "Every man carries within him a madman," and every night that madman comes out. During dreams all men without exception are fatuous, and the world is a vast sleeping asylum. Shakespeare has just closed his "King Lear"; he falls

asleep and straightway raves as madly as his dis-crowned creation. And yet how useful this is to all brains. It carries off the waste steam ; it is a safety valve to the nonsense that is fermenting in all minds. Still it is an awful thought. Thou shudderest at madness as at the greatest calamity ; and yet thou hast only to shut thine eyes and thou art madder than Hamlet.

This day, which began with heavy, close, windless rain, "a day among the dockans," has cleared up beautifully, and a wind has arisen to dry the wet leaves, which are withering fast. I hope to be in a better mood for verse to-night than yestreen.

24th September, 1863.—Could not write a word last night of poetry, but worked instead at a lecture I am to give at Sunderland. Feel very much depressed on various accounts, and am no better but worse to-day, though the day is fine.

"Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,  
Without our special wonder?"

Am asked to-day to lecture at Dublin. Shall perpend. Would rather like to see that superb city.

Autumn is so much my favourite season, that I grudge every bad day, every rainy hour of it, and feel as if I were specially robbed. Yet autumn has often been poisoned to me by some untoward thing or other. Sometimes cholera, as in 1853 and 1854, and 1849, has been in the land. Sometimes, as in 1841 and 1856, wet weather has monopolised the best of the season. Sometimes, as in 1842, 1843, and 1848, my soul and heart were so miserably wrong that though I did intensely enjoy the

autumn, the joy was morbid, dashed often with profound wretchedness, and looks now like a bye-gone sin. I remember with greatest gusto one or two fine days at the Burn and Arnhall in August, and one or two delightful October noons and afternoons at dear old Comrie. I think after death I'll haunt these spots, at least in autumn.

*25th September, 1863.*—Have got to-day the last proof of the new edition of the "Covenanters," with my early essay\* as an appendix. Perused and corrected the proof of the essay with interest. The sentences are rather long and there is occasionally a want of decisiveness in thought and style, still it reads better in print than I had expected. My view of Scott, however, is very much changed, I mean as to his spirit and Christianity.

*30th September, 1863.*—Came home last night from Sunderland. Enjoyed my visit much. Preached thrice on Sabbath to capital audiences, and on Monday lectured in Rees' church to a great ticket-admitted crowd on the Dangers of Great Britain. I met old Everett again, the author of the "Fly-sheets," the Lucifer of the Methodists who drew "one-third part of the hosts of heaven after him." Seventy-nine years of age, he is still preaching every Sabbath, and had travelled 200 miles to be present at my lecture. He is genial, serene, intelligent, with a smile now and then, which bespeaks the satirist, crossing his sagacious face which is not

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\* See page 37.

unlike the portraits of Crabbe; and he bids you good-bye with the old fatherly words, "God bless you!" He knew Ebenezer Elliott, Montgomery, and Southey. He says Elliott was not at all satisfied with his Unitarian creed but had not fully found his way to any other. Southey even was rather *willing* to believe Christianity than a Christian.

I came home by the new Waverley Route.

1st October, 1863.—There has been some skyey blunder, and instead of October, November is here. What a dull, dripping, dismal day! My spirits are accordingly a little flat. Wrote from fifty to sixty lines of "Night" yestreen. Whether I be successful in drawing out the poetry of the stars, what an immense amount of poetical element there is in them.

Read at Sunderland, a little of *Hood's Own*. His recollections of his early Dundee life are, to me, very interesting. His account of his literary contemporaries is amusing, although his sympathies with Charles Lamb lead him to give him a disproportionate place. His picture of Coleridge—with his white hair, fat ruddy full face, his mode of conversation, and his queer digs at orthodox popular notions, as when he says that many people after death expect to get wings and become a kind of celestial poultry—is very characteristic. Poor S. T. C.! What a fine fellow he had been in his latter days, although always too self-indulgent—a kind of Bacchus-Apollo-Plato. Coleridge was wealthy in thoughts and images and extempore speculations, but had, I think, no great leading idea to possess, unify, and permanently inspire him. Here he differed



from Spinoza, Swedenborg, Kant, and Fichte. His proper medium should have been a philosophic poem glorifying some old belief, such as Lucretius did for the Epicurean theory of things. He had, undoubtedly, power to create an artistic unity. Witness his "Ancient Mariner." It is not a large, but it is a true whole, artistically, as well as a wondrous poem.

*2nd October.*—Wrote, yestreen, fifty more lines, rather good, I think, on the lost planet between Mars and Jupiter, and on the aerolites.

I find Parker [Rev. John Parker] has made £40 by my raid on Sunderland. Good for him!

This day twenty-one years ago I preached my sermon on Hades which made such a row. It had the effect of filling my evening lectures and making me better known. I had previously passed here only for that "vile voluntary, Gilfillan." The presbytery and Eadie behaved rather shabbily in the matter. However, it is past. I preached some far better evening lectures that winter, including one on Infant Salvation, and one on the Fall. It was a terrible winter, that!

*5th October.*—Lectured to a crowded house on the Tares of the Field.

Am reading Jeremiah at present at family worship. What richness of metaphor and of feeling; what heart-broken eloquence; what a noble, weeping, wrestling, divine soul he was! His tears came down large, electric, like the first drops of a thunder-cloud. He is not so picturesque, but he is fully as eloquent

as Isaiah. He has no passage so powerful as some in that prophet: but he is as a whole not inferior. He is the Demosthenes of sorrow, and often, too, of Phillippic fire—with all his vehemence and intensity, but with far more poetry.

*8th October.*—Have just read Brougham's speech at the opening of the Association for Social Science. There is one passage in it worthy of his very best days, that on the Americans. What a man he has been and is! Eighty-five years of age, in body a mummy, and yet speaking with such clear good sense, comprehension and power. He is a living proof of immortality. What a pity Burke, with his far grander and deeper soul, had not lived as long. In that case he might have been alive and talking Ante-diluvian wisdom till at least 1813. Brougham's name will not in future ages rank so high as Burke's, by firmaments; but assuredly the statesmen of his own day seem pigmies in comparison with him.

The weather is genuine November still—east winds, heavy mists, and that strange nameless sinking of the spirits which has always made November weather abhorrent to me as to so many.

*10th October.*—To-day an old portrait of Byron's Zuleika that I have had twenty-seven years, and bought because I, then a young lover, thought it like my betrothed, is broken in house-cleaning, and I feel as if I had lost a friend. It was the only picture I had that I valued, except one of Puck presented to me by poor David Scott.

*P.S.*—False alarm ! It is only, I find, the glass that is broken, not the picture itself. Hurrah !

[*Note.*—This Zuleika picture, seen casually in Edinburgh, and bought as a gift to Margaret Vallentine, hung in the study, and was put to a special use. Every sermon, as soon as written, was placed behind the picture till required. The practice was invariable. Even when a sermon was finished only half-an-hour before the time for its delivery, it was placed behind the Zuleika. Hence the alarm. This habit was not the only one which Gilfillan kept almost superstitiously. Touching the twig of a certain bush in the garden every time he went out was another.]

*12th October.*—Lectured last night in Temple Lane Church on "The Desire of all Nations shall Come ;" house overflowing. Depressed when returning, and contrasted my theory of Christ with that of Rénan, remembering that he believed his quite as strongly as I mine. *Da Domine Lucem.*

*13th October.*—Bad, dull, wet day—unfortunate for the statue inauguration [statue of Prince Consort] at Aberdeen. Her Majesty has hitherto been so fortunate in her weather. But, I declare, it is beginning to brighten.

A gentleman calling yesterday said that to his certain knowledge Henry Cockburn used to say that Lord Brougham was "the greatest liar that Providence ever permitted to enter the world." I know

the Whigs generally thought him a false and vindictive man. . . . Lyndhurst, another of these great old savages and satyrs, is gone to his account. I did not know before that he had been an intimate of Volney and had travelled in America with him. Although he became, or seemed to become, a Conservative in politics, he was always, I suspect, a Volneyist in religion. He was, however, a kind patron to my friend Croly.

*15th October.*—John Clark [Rev. John Clark, Abernethy] preached well to-day (the Fast-day here), knacky, evangelical, and well-delivered. Like the most of ministers, he dreads the Broad Church party. Now, without fraternising fully with that party as it exists in any of our churches, I honour it for seeking at least to preserve Christianity by removing those weak elements which have gradually encrusted themselves around it, and giving its Divine part fair play. If they depress it somewhat too much from its conventional place, they at the same time elevate other systems a little, and thereby tend to balance matters. A church dating from Arnold and watered by the heart's blood of Frederick Robertson must have some great truth within it, a truth which Maurice cannot extract.

I don't think new views are as yet in general making better men — just because they are new, crude, half-formed, and, with the public in Scotland, unpopular ; and those who hold them are exposed to a suspicion which too often fulfils its own prophecy. But I am certain that sooner or later Wisdom will be justified of her children, and the larger religion will



make the race humbler, more charitable, better and higher.

*16th October.*—Beecher is still palavering away. Logan writes to-day in his praise. I have told him in reply that I have no sympathy and pretend to have none with his progress, that I think his speeches replete with Yankee vulgarity, often sophistical and often unchristian, that his idea of reaching the liberty of the slaves through a sea of blood was, thank God, as chimerical as it was inhuman, and that I wondered a Glasgow audience would regard with favour such blood-soaked rubbish.

*20th October.*—F. H., J. G., and John Muir were at dinner yesterday along with MacSwaine [from Auchtermuchty]. It was a very pleasant occasion. Paterson of Stonehouse called. He is a manly fellow, very tall, with a great deal of good sense and fun blended. He was talking rapturously of his name-father, Henry Angus of Aberdeen. Allan of Arbroath came to tea, and we had a good deal of fun. To-day is beautiful. The Presbytery is meeting. Go to Forfar in the evening to Mr. Wright's ordination soiree.

*23rd October.*—Spoke at the Working Men's College meeting on the elevation of the working classes. The object, I fear, won't be attained in a hurry.

Was at Perth Fast yesterday. It was a glorious autumn day, and the sight of the Carse of Gowrie

and Kinnoul Hill in their gorgeous decay was delightful. Don't like Perth public audiences, and still less Perth private critics. . . . It has never yet numbered a powerful age-influencing mind among its ministers or citizens. Young was nearest to that character, but was injured to some extent by timidity of temperament and the appearance of undue policy of conduct. In reality he was a good, honest, and friendly man.

Another magnificent day. The weather has taken a decided turn for the better. Happy those who can take refuge from the cares and vexations of this carking life, and from the society of that poor, false worm called Man, in thy bosom, O mighty Mother! ever most beautiful in thy decay, and find in it, what I, alas! have never yet found, full satisfaction, a happy and conscious immersion, as though the river entering the ocean knew and rejoiced in becoming a portion of the mighty Deep!

*30th October.*—Came home this morning at 1 A.M. from Liverpool. Enjoyed everything except the returning journey. At Kendal it blew a perfect hurricane. On the Border old Boreas gave us a most unkindly welcome, with all the might of his snellest and most husbanded breath. Was bitterly cold when I came home; but a good fire and good food revived me. Have to-day been dashing off letters; shall record afterwards my impressions of the journey.

*31st October.*—Lectured at Liverpool to a very

respectable house, and was well received. Slept at Mr. Graham's,\* who is a superior man, well read, thoughtful, and with a good fancy, within a few inches of being a great man. Saw old Crichton, who is rather prematurely feeble, but has been a fine and fine-looking man. Went to Manchester, and called on Alexander Ireland, of the *Examiner*, whom I met once before in 1847. He has literary tastes of the keenest, extensive literary acquaintance, a very large and well-selected library, and yet has the sense not to write. He took me to dine with him at Bowdon. His daughter presided very pleasantly. A young lady from Penrith there too, called Nicholson, comely and very highly accomplished, in languages especially, yet frank and modest. [*Marginal postscript*—Afterwards Mrs. Ireland, as I predicted in my own heart at the time.] Mr. Ireland showed me on two shelves of his library every scrap of Hazlitt's writing he has been able to collect. He is a hero-worshipper of the first water.

Lectured to a crowded house in M'Kerrow's school-room. Audience enthusiastic. Met at the close a number of friends, admirers, &c. Slept at Dr. M'Kerrow's. He is a man of great energy, somewhat past his best, has a large share in the Manchester *Examiner* and is very intelligent, rather commanding, and not a little imperious. To me he was very kind. He spoke a good deal of the late Dr. MacCall, whom he knew well, and eulogised highly as a "prince in Israel," of whom his published sermons give no idea. Lunched in "The Shades"

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\* Afterwards Professor Graham.

with Ireland and M'Kerrow and started for home at twenty minutes past two.

Wrote a few more lines of "Night" yestreen. Had a letter from Aird, who advises me to work the poem slowly and to beware of slovenliness. I have thanked him and given him some idea of the plan of the poem.

*2nd November.*—Lectured yesterday in the evening on "The Lost Sheep." Church very crowded. Before sermon a gentleman called at the vestry and was introduced as the Rev. W. Knibb Lea, missionary from China, nephew of the famous William Knibb. Him I once heard in Edinburgh and remember well. At first Mr. Knibb appeared quite a common-place missionary, but kindled as he went on into a great natural orator, his blood running fire, and his whole nature transfigured into incarnate eloquence.

*6th November.*—Lectured at Tillicoultry on Wednesday. Had a very full audience. Much pensive thought going and returning. Thought of my visit fourteen years ago, of old Browning then alive, with his burly head, his strong racy riotous talk, his exhaustless animal spirits, his fierce but transient tropical thunderstorms of passion, his peculiar career as a thinker, having passed through almost as many phases of thought as Blanco White. Thought also of my early admiration for him and of the week or nearly so I once spent in his house. Visited several persons on my return and then went to dine at Westfield. Knight was there; he is a great worshipper



of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Robert Browning, is in taste fond of the transcendental and in creed eclectic. I got rather strong in pulling down a bit his idols. I denied altogether Carlyle's originality as a thinker, denounced his barren negationism and maintained that he kept his admirers no more than the autumn oak its leaves. I admitted that Browning had pages and poems of beauty intense and original, shining amid a grievous and wilful darkness. I said Ruskin's strength was that of disease; he was just a sublime fever. Carlyleism was only a spiked shell after all, its spikes turned inwardly, and it pierced rather than protected those who were for a season within it.

Visited a woman yesterday who had been complaining of deafness. She said she had received great benefit from a "shock of Calvinism" (galvanism, of course). I told Mr. Knight that I was sure it had never come from either him or me. Funny little malapropisms do occur. Some time ago, a man describing one who had been stunned in a railway accident, said, "Ye see, sir, when he had recovered his conscientiousness."—I do not know if the strongest shock of "Calvinism" could now bring the world as a whole, especially the American world, to its "conscientiousness."

*12th November.*—Left for Stockton on Saturday at 6 A.M., a dismal dark morning. Arrived about 7 P.M. Lived with an Aberdonian named Fowler, a sensible, solid, yet kindly man, his wife a tall, good-looking Englishwoman. Saw some pleasant, intelligent men, especially one named Blair, a hero-worshipper, who knew Samuel Brown, and who, when he read at

Haddington my first "Gallery" proposed a pilgrimage to Dundee to hear me preach. He is now a flourishing engineer.

*13th November.*—Went down to a conversazione at 9 P.M. yesterday and gave my word for Poland to a most receptive and applausive audience. Heard Spence telling some good stories and giving some good advices, not in the best way perhaps, but bluffly and rather genially. Wilson of the Free Church followed. He never speaks well unless he has some hard-headed subject to grapple with. I like him for his sturdiness. Johnstone, Hanna's successor, was, of course, in the chair. He is a pale and thoughtful youth, not unlike what M'Cheyne was when he came here, but of the broad school, intelligently and prudently. He does not seem very strong in body. How many lads come to the pulpit spent and dying waves!

Hamilton, who came as house surgeon in room of Glen in the infirmary, died this morning of fever. The event occurring so soon after Glen's death has excited unusual consternation and sorrow. He was doing remarkably well.

Preach to-morrow on the words "Ever with the Lord." Have written with earnestness and energy; but, ah me! how difficult to realise its sentiments.

Got, through W. Anderson, a book from his colleague Alexander Macleod,\* entitled "European Life." Like what I have read of it much. It is learned, thoughtful, liberal, and eloquent. Perhaps it attempts to grasp too much in one rather small volume.

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\* Afterwards Dr. Macleod, of Birkenhead.

MacLeod is not so unique or powerful as Anderson, but a more modern thinker, with a better style and much more fancy, literature, and imagination. Must read and review the book carefully.

16th November.—William Leng discoursed sweetly of my "Covenanters" to-day. In one thing he errs. He speaks as if I were not sufficiently appreciated in Dundee. It may be so; but assuredly no one draws such audiences, or receives more public attention. I am glad he notices the appendix containing my early essay as the most remarkable feature of the book.

I have written a short notice of that extraordinary woman Janet Hamilton's poems for the *Dundee Advertiser*. There is nothing in them extremely good, but the marvel lies in an old woman of no education, who can hardly write, inditing so many fair and well-composed things, possessing so much good sense, correctness, taste, and fluency of expression. She is very independent in her judgments, altogether an honour to her class.

Saw a woman to-day who had lost her son at sea. She had had a strong presentiment he was never to return. Her daughter had a dream about him of a strange and terrific kind on the very night of his death, had jotted down the date and found it to correspond. Our nerves in certain conditions seem to become electric wires running to and fro throughout the whole earth. What Morell calls the "prevision of souls" seems an ascertained truth.

21st November.—Went to Alexandria on Wednesday afternoon. Had a miserably long, dull, and

tedious ride from Stirling to Balloch, thirty miles in about four hours! Lectured to a large audience in the public hall. The vale of Leven (Smollett's Leven) must have been beautiful ere the public works polluted it; a fine transit from Loch Lomond to the Clyde. Went to Dumbarton; met my old friend Halley [Rev. William M. Halley], a fellow of infinite jest. Came home yesterday and, after a few hours, started for Arbroath. Met an Established clergyman called Lowe, from Loch Lee. He had read a paper in which I express a sort of wish to be buried in the romantic sepulchre adjacent to Loch Lee where Ross, author of the "Fortunate Shepherdess," reposes.

*26th November.*—Came home to-day from Edinburgh and Hamilton. Went by Perth to Glasgow on Tuesday afternoon. It was a lovely day for the season. One-half of the sun was rendered in the smooth Tay with his rays concentrated into a pillar seeking the deepest depths of the river. I had often heard of such effects, but never had seen them so fully before. At Glasgow a beautiful moon shone out. Lectured to an excellent audience at Hamilton. Dr. Anderson had his gig waiting for me at the close. Rode through that beautiful road to Bothwell and saw the famous bridge by moonlight. Found all my notions about it contradicted. A mile from Uddingston a dark figure appeared on the side of the road. It was Anderson! We picked him up and drove him home in the back of his own conveyance. I enjoyed the night, or rather morning, with him (it was nearly 3 A.M. ere we separated) very



much. We talked of many matters, differing frequently, but never quarrelling. Travelled in the morning to Edinburgh, the road in a great measure new to me. Passing Mid-Calder, I remembered old days when I was a student there in 1833. Gave to them the tribute of a long, deep sigh. Met Gardiner at Morton's at dinner. In the evening came the soiree.

*2nd December.*—Returned from my jaunt to-day at 1.20 and found all well. Pleasant, although somewhat laborious, journey. I reached Glasgow at a quarter past six; met good Logan, who gave me tea at his coffee-house, then went to Clydeview, Partick, where I found my brother a little better in mind although not in memory. In the morning (Sabbath) went to Bath Street in the forenoon and found a hall, which holds some 600, quite full. Preached on "the Desire of all Nations shall Come." Thereafter went to Anderson's vestry where I met him and, for a few minutes, Macleod. In the afternoon found myself in Anderson's pulpit with an immense multitude crowding the large church. Gave them my discourse on "Night." Went to tea with Logan. In the evening Bath Street was literally besieged. I had great liberty, pleasure, and *perspiration*. Lectured next day at Stirling to a decent audience on "Norway." Went yesterday to Alloa and had a capital meeting.

*3rd December.*—When in Stirling glanced slightly at R. W. Hamilton's life. Struck by seeing a note from Logan (my own Logan) to Hamilton's wife

describing the Doctor's preachings in Glasgow on a particular Sabbath in 1843. Logan had known Hamilton when a missionary in Leeds. Glanced at Hamilton's speculations on future punishment. Heavy, lumbering, half-human sophistry they seemed, and the recollection of them gave me some melancholy reflections on yesterday's homeward way. He drivels perpetually about God's moral character and moral law as if there could be any fear for them arising from the education and felicity of His creatures, as if God were a petty magistrate, not a Divine Power, the Everlasting Principle of love and progress. Hamilton's style is about the worst in the language, never more rapid than a John Lambert or a Falstaff at the gallop. He pays you an enormous sum in successive single sovereigns, and you get as tired of them at last as if they were farthings. Yet his thought and feeling and fancy are those of a man of genius.

*4th December.*—Weather still bitterly cold. Logan has sent me a hat "in acknowledgment of good derived from the 'Bards'!" I am now nearly from top to toe a walking Loganism—spectacles, plaid, stick, and hat.

Masson has, I understand, noticed my "Covenanters" favourably in the *Reader*. This is kind, or at all events manly, as I, in my review of his "Milton," did not specially spare its faults. By-the-way, his recent paper on Kidd of Aberdeen is an admirable one. Rare character, Kidd. He had immense power always and, latterly, reverence in Aberdeen. No one could there strive against him and prosper. One Spence, an Independent, a man of considerable talent,

having ventured to oppose him in reference to the Apocrypha question, Kidd boasted that he would "blow the body oot o' Aberdeen;" and he did so. Nor did Spence look behind him till he found himself in the south of England. Once, as MacDonald of Ferintosh was beginning his sermon in the evening, Kidd, who had come in from the vestry, listened a while, was delighted, clapped his hands and bawled out: "Well done, MacDonald, haud at the sinners of Aberdeen." Altogether one of the men-mastodons who are now extinct, composed of great power, great eccentricity, and no little solid worth.

*6th December.*—A cold, windy, what we Scotch sometimes call "vicious," day. Lectured in the forenoon on "Elijah in the wilderness." In the afternoon preached on "He that increaseth knowledge," &c. Said that in all knowledge, from the learning of the first letter of the alphabet to the deepest philological researches, from the first stroke of the pencil to the *chef-d'œuvre* of the artist, from the first schoolboy copy to the great and enduring work, all accessions of knowledge and the power accompanying it give pleasure, pure, without remorse, and that could not bear repetition. But, secondly, knowledge had its drawbacks. The more we know, the more we know our ignorance; the more also we know of the darkness and mystery which envelop all knowledge. Again, the more we know of God, the more we feel our distance from Him. The more we know of ourselves, the more wonderful and unsearchable we seem. We know ourselves only by reflection, and how little are we able to answer such questions as—What are

we?—Whence have we come?—What is death?—Whence that poison of sin that pollutes our nature? Lastly, knowledge does not satisfy the cravings and aspirations of the human heart, and it is attended by penalties both of body and mind. Secular knowledge is thus shallow, and even sacred has its drawbacks. Not the very best Christian can say positively that his creed in all its extent is true; and in proportion as he feels the truth of his creed must be his sorrow for the condition of the vast numbers who do not.

*8th December.*—Have got a cheap edition of Pearson on Infidelity sent me with a preface by Cairns. The preface is very disappointing, very sermonising. He classes all men as infidels who doubt his particular version of religion, and has no sympathy with the attempt to eliminate the human from the Divine in Scripture. His attempt to bolster up Old Testament morality to the level of Christian is very helpless. Cairns from his knowledge and piety should have stood in the foremost rank of the Broad Church; as it is, his position is ludicrously unlike himself.

*10th December.*—Went to Falkirk on Tuesday and lectured to an enthusiastic audience. Returned on Wednesday, spent precisely two hours in Dundee, dined, went to a funeral, and started for Leven. What a beautiful winter morning light, like an after-shine of early autumn, lay yesterday on the dim deep Ochils, on the Wallace monument, and the cottages and houses of Bridge of Allan, and on Allan Water swollen with rain, and wailing, but most musically, to



the sere leaves and rugged rocky banks around and above it! But the great northern mountains were invisible, veiled as with a covering of blue—half air and half mist.

*11th December.*—What a horrid day of the worst November type, thick, rainy, foggy, cold! Have been transcribing all forenoon, always dull work; and I never felt it so dull as to-day.

Am disgusted with Samuel Davidson [his introduction to the Old Testament] the longer I read. His critical canons and conclusions may be right, are generally right, I think; but not a bit of soul, inspiration, genuine sympathy with the Hebrew genius, or with any lofty thing at all has he!

*12th December.*—This day bright and very windy. Rather brisker in feeling. Had rather a pleasant little *sederunt* with two young preachers, Hay and Miller.

Finished a discourse for St. Andrew's Church to-morrow evening on "Christ the Great Teacher," my April "action sermon," with some remarks in addition appropriate to the times, and especially to that brutal pugilistic business.

Another gorgeous sky, all bronze deepening into blood, with a wild, windy look, and the slightest, thinnest, most delicate seeming of new moons, violet coloured, all but capsized on the Red Sea around.

*14th December.*—Lectured yesterday to a very large audience in St. Andrew's Church.

This day beautiful. Married two couples this morning and one since. Am reading Motley [Dutch Republic]. He is a very ingenious, masterly, and picturesque historian. Read a good speech of Walter Smith's on the American question. Agree with much of it; but his idea of a crusade against slavery is absurd. What if any nation, previous to 1834, had invaded us for the purpose of compelling us to suppress slavery in the West Indies? Smith is evidently a noble man, thoughtful, conscientious, above partyisms and clamours of every kind.

16th December.—Dined with Rev. R. Logan and his nephew yesterday—the nephew a fine rattling fellow with a good scientific head. Have got Waddell's "Strictures on Rénan" sent me to-day. It seems fairly and candidly written, and, I think, very much from my own point of view. Have again ordered Rénan.

18th December.—Have at last got, and read one half of Rénan. It is a fascinating book. This I expected; but it is also a profound and philosophical book, although his theory often breaks down, and there is a good deal of inconsistency in parts of it. Worst of all there is, here and there, a tendency to insinuate something against Christ's *morale*, like a frog-foot peeping stealthily through, which I thoroughly hate. Nothing can be sweeter than his descriptions of the Nazarene scenery and the early days of Christ. There is a little sentimentalism here and there, as in that address to the shade of his sister; but there is

something more and higher than mere sentimentalism.

Go to Rathillet sacrament to-morrow forenoon, and to a soiree at Arbroath on Monday.

*22nd December.*—Enjoyed my run to Rathillet. J. B. [Rev. J. Borwick], a shrewd, peculiar, somewhat waggish man, with a keen piercing eye and a considerable knowledge of human nature, not devoid of enthusiasm and literary sympathies. He delivers his sermons with a good deal of graceful energy, is well read—altogether an influential and prominent man in his sphere. He was one of my earliest acquaintances in Edinburgh. Rathillet is rather a sweet nook and, towards the west and Norman Law, beautiful. Kilmany, Chalmers' original parish, is close at hand. Rode in to Cupar, the road hilly, but full of striking points. Went to Arbroath in the evening. Felt a little jaded, but got into energy as I went on. Howatt had a smart speech on the newspaper press. I spoke on Capital Punishments, substance of an article I wrote for *Meliora* about a year ago. This day hard frost, but brilliant as June. Finished at Rathillet the reading of Rénan. He is certainly an earnest, even if mistaken, man. But I cannot realise his Christ. And I see some feeble points in his history of Him. His account of the raising of Lazarus is positively contemptible. There is a melancholy tone in the book which makes it sound like the dirge of Jesus.

*23rd December.*—The frost has yielded to high winds during the night. The day is fresh and blowy.

Go to Kinclaven in the afternoon, and return by Newtyle to-morrow. Wrote forty lines of "Night" yestreen with considerable gusto—theme, the Dark Stars, the poetry of which I have tried to extract, not I think unsuccessfully.

What a wonderful expedition, I had almost called it flight, to the Nile, that of Speke! One thinks of the thousand baffled conjectures and researches after that "Sacred River," of Bruce's premature tears of joy in the discovery, and of the mystical grandeur wrapt around the sources of a stream which seemed, like the Milky Way, to flow from an eternal spring. And now to find the "Father of Waters" issuing from a large peaceful lake, not from some aerial mountain or fabulous fountain-head. Thus, all great, permanent, useful power, has its source in, and derives its strength from, peace.

*25th December.*—A year to-day since I commenced this journal. It has grown into rather a rich repertory of significant and insignificant scraps, and I have formed quite an affection for it.

Enjoyed my visit to Kinclaven. D. Y. [David Young] is a fine fellow, full of endless anecdote and talk. The scenery around Ardler and Meigle looked beautiful in the still bright winter day. The pines seemed serenely glad, the stubble had a golden hue, and the few remaining red leaves seemed dreaming,

"Some of autumn past,  
And some of spring approaching fast."

Thackeray died yesterday morning in his bed, only fifty-two. He was a minor scourge of God, the Attila of fashionable life. He lashed flesh and bone



alike to ribbands. His blows were all aimed at vital parts, the head and the heart. He must be herding somewhere near Swift, Juvenal, and Junius in the other world.

The Punjaub is up. I am amazed at the notion that the Indians should take our rule as a providential necessity, and as better than their own could be. So, I suppose, should the Scotch have done in Wallace's days. The Indians cannot be expected to see matters with our eyes, and perhaps may prefer their own wild freedom to our gold-chained bondage.

*27th December.*—Lectured last night to children. A crowded house. Was simple and earnest—subject, "The first Christmas, and how it was celebrated." Dwelt on Christ as the great model to children. Christ is indeed our last bulwark, and yet His history is encumbered with difficulties so enormous that there must be an inner tower to flee to (as in that Abimelech story) in His doctrine, influence, &c.

*31st December.*—This year has been to me a year of no particular interest, except in the writing of this Journal and of "Night ;" otherwise rather a dull year. Yet I have had great reason for thankfulness that no black shadow of any kind has rested on its history, and that health and many other blessings have been preserved. Let me go on to meet the future with a resolute and manly spirit. It must have trials ; it may bring triumphs and joys. Let me be ready for all and sundry. My deepest source of anxiety is about the present state of religious belief, which

seems all crumbling to pieces, and nothing at once new and solid arising in its room. The state of the Continent, too, is alarming. As to America, we must now look on with stationary disgust and wonder.

Marry some seven or eight couples to-night, the usual penalty of Hogmanay.

*1st January, 1864.*—Pleasant coming in of the New-Year with Mrs. Gilfillan and the dear youngsters, Marien, Mittannus (Agnes), and Willy V., Davie and Ned S. Married the seven couples, and Willy, acting as clerk, took them down.

To-day, like most New-Year days, is heavy-laden and lowering. Go to the usual meeting of children in the church, thence to a funeral, and thence to dinner at Westfield.

*2nd January.*—A note this morning from William Scott, Glasgow, anent my remarks on Thackeray. He speaks highly of his heart. I reply that I had only stated the general impression, and it seemed in entire keeping with the facts of his history. It was but natural that a man, who when he was close on middle-age had still his reputation and fortune to make, who had associated at one time with the lower ranks of London literary life, till by a happy hit he obtained a first-rate reputation, should be soured and half savagised, and so undoubtedly he was. Some parts of his "Georges" were diabolical, as bad as Byron. Scott is exactly of my opinion about America. He writes in a manly style.

Morton sends me his "Family Circle." It looks well and is well arranged.

*3rd January.*—Lectured on the calling of Elisha ; defended the dignity of labour ; spoke of God's hidden ones ; contrasted Elijah's spirit with that of Christ. In the afternoon preached on "The time is short." Spoke 1st, of length of time when we thought how much work might be done in it, suffering endured, good and evil responsibility contracted ; 2nd, of its shortness compared to God's existence, to the past eternity, to the age of the earth, to the boundless extent of the universe, and to the coming eternity. Closed with practical thoughts in reference to our duty to time, to intensify, to weigh, to recognise it as a portion of eternity and to prepare for its close. Alluded in the course to a calculation I had seen (in Colenso, by the way) as to the distance of the stars from us, and from each other. By the swiftest railway we could reach the moon in three hundred days and the sun in three hundred and thirty years, but if we could reach the sun in a day, it would require 550 years of such days to pass from the sun to the nearest fixed star. The Pleiades, I said, seemed to kiss each other like seven rosebuds on one stalk, and yet there were immensities between them. No solitude like that of a star.

*8th January.*—Better than yesterday, but not quite well. Still a slight bar of bile over my eyebrows. The day gloomy with thick hoar-frost. No letters. Nothing but rumours of war on the Continent. Hart

has a clever article on the subject in to-day's *Argus*. Garibaldi seems "straining upon the slip" for Venice and Rome. Kossuth is lifting up his trumpet call to the Magyars. There has been found out a conspiracy against Louis Napoleon's life in Paris. Four men armed with lethal weapons, gunpowder, &c., have been arrested. It is generally understood that the first shot will awaken all the guns on the Continent. We are surely nearing some deep and desperate crisis in the world's history, one of those "days of the Lord" in the periodicity of which Arnold believed, if not that "great day of God Almighty" of which John speaks.

Read on at Humboldt after supper, not always very intelligible to me for want of mathematical knowledge, but giving some striking views and suggestions. How fine that fact recorded of Copernicus, that one of his greatest griefs on his deathbed was that he had never seen the planet Mercury. One remembers Jean Paul's expression, "I never saw nor hope to see the ocean; but the great ocean of eternity I shall not fail to see." There is in astronomy great grandeur, but it is a cold and dreary grandeur like that of a scene in Nova Zembla. Those stars may be fire, but we are too far away from them to feel their warmth. Their multitudes dazzle, their periods confound us. Their silence seems ghost-like, and the idea of the infinite they give us is that of infinite incomprehensibility, rather than of boundless benevolence. The astronomer and the poet admire more than love them, and the vast majority of men do not care for them one rush. The smile of a child or a maiden touches every heart, the lapse of a summer stream is music in every ear, while Venus is welcomed with a cold cry of



admiration, and the roll of spheres, even if we heard them moving, would be to us no melody, any more than the sound of a palace gate when shut in our face. The study of the stars quickens at first, but ultimately sinks and overwhelms the mind.

6 P.M.—Went out and saw several sick persons, and since tea have sketched my forenoon lecture and am a little livelier and better. A little duty blended with a walk are the best tonics. Wrote a few lines of the poem this morning and must have at it again. A good-natured friend I met in the train quoted a man as saying about me, “I would like that man for his own sake dead.” This might mean either that he thought my work was over, or that I might hope for a better reward for it hereafter. It was not a very friendly speech, but we must bear with such judgments and hope they do not express a general opinion. And the true way is to do one’s duty diligently, honestly, and bravely, careless of opinion whether general or special, and leave the results to God.

*9th January.*—Storm still continues. Had a good spell of “Night” yestreen, some sixty lines. Letter from Logan who is well. Have begun my sermon on “I will give you rest.”

A lecture by Landels of London on Edward Irving. He is a brilliant elocutionist, I believe, and rhetorician. I see he quotes a passage or two from my “First Gallery.” I hear Carlyle is projecting a life of Irving, being dissatisfied with Mrs. Oliphant’s. I very much wish he would. After the usual deductions it would

be a noble work, but would, I dare say, like that of Sterling commit him with the religious world.

How thoroughly I am now out of the literary world. I once wrote in some five or six periodicals; I now write in none. I once reviewed books continually; I now very seldom do. I once had a new work out at least once a year; I have now been guiltless of a book for nearly four years. Many, I suppose, think me effete; others, written down; others prematurely old; others, taken to tickling the ears of the groundlings, &c. And yet I never felt my mind stronger than while writing parts of this journal and "Night," and perhaps one or both of these, not to speak of my projected "Lives of the Poets," may yet make the world amend its conclusions.

How many men reputed great, have been, on the whole and in comparison with their fame, abortive authors. Such were Coleridge, Chalmers, and Irving, and such are Candlish, John Bruce, and Thomas Aird. My books on the other hand, should I complete them as I intend, will be at least a pretty fair and full revelation of me as I have been, although not perhaps as I might have been.

7 P.M.—Have finished the sermon on "Rest," and read Landels.\* He has glow without much point or force, discovers an excellent spirit, great command of language, and has one racy passage about the manner in which the "venerable owls of that day (night?) dealt with this dangerous and sky-seeking eagle who would not utter the stereotyped tu-whit, tu-whoo of the orthodox owl fraternity." I am not quite pleased

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\* Dr. William Landels, now of Edinburgh.

with his sentiments about Irving and the *Tongues*. I don't blame Irving greatly in the matter; but I rather think he rushed too hastily to his judgments and allowed his preconceived desires to influence his opinions and even eyesight; drew near to the fire that he might be burnt and was burnt accordingly. Landels errs, too, in his sympathy with Irving's notion of a modern missionary. Find a missionary of our day on wings, in the enthusiasm of the apostles, and you may spare your moneys; but where, as now, the wings are clipped or gone, salaries are absolutely necessary. Irving's high tone might have suited an age of Peter the Hermits or Francis Xaviers. But there are few of this class now. We now know as well as ever the superiority of the Gospel to heathen systems, but we know it in a more measured form, value the Gospel more for its gradual educational and civilising influences, and care comparatively little for such a wild, fire-eyed rush to save victims from eternal destruction as Irving seems at one time to have identified with missionary zeal and enterprise.

10th January.—Seldom felt more wretched than last evening after writing the above—bile, I think, clouding the prospect. Woke at six with the same feeling.

In the afternoon preached on "Rest." Spoke 1st, of restlessness, describing that of the fever-stricken, of the guilty, of the maniac, of the restless inquirer, of the man seeking the salvation of his soul; 2nd, of false rest, that of the sleeper on the top of a mast, of a man resting on the verge of a precipice, of a man falling asleep and dying amid the snow, and

finding parallels for these in those who trust in wealth, honour, mere outward religious profession, &c.; 3rdly, of the rest Christ promises and gives; and 4thly, of the pledges he has given for it—1st, the Sabbath; and 2ndly, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Compared the latter to the inscription, "Rest, and be thankful," in Glencroe. The height on which it was placed commanded two views—one behind, the other before. Concluded by saying something to sorrowing believers and to doubting and uncertain communicants.

12th January.—Have got and read Maurice's letter in the *Spectator* on eternal punishment. It is clearer than his wont, and very earnest and solemn in its tone. I partly agree with it, so far as to think that the doctrine of eternal damnation stated in its crude form makes God a monster. I can as yet get no farther than that it is not His purpose to give any of His creatures eternal death unless death means annihilation, or on the supposition of their for ever and ever refusing any terms of submission or reconciliation.

The scheme for a series of lectures in answer to Renan seems at an end. Burns has backed out of it, and, I presume, some of the rest were cool. My objection was partly that, as there were so many points of view, there could be no harmony. The lectures might be brilliant fragments, but would not form an effective and useful whole. In our present perplexities no such whole indeed is possible, conceivable, or perhaps desirable. Let us "wait" ere we thus "labour."



14th January.—I am now writing at 11 A.M. by gas-light, a thing I cannot remember doing before. Worthy Mr. Lamb, of Errol, dined here yesterday, a fine, genial, well-preserved man of seventy-seven. He gets a jubilee feast on the 12th of April, to which I have promised to go. He will then have been fifty years a minister. Lamb has a fine mind, a good taste and style, a large and liberal mind. In the evening came Knight and Bell, and we had a pleasant little crack.

16th January.—Went to-day to present W. Leng [now Sir W. Christopher Leng], on behalf of the *Advertiser* staff, with the "Encyclopædia Britannica." I did my best. W. Leng spoke feelingly and in good taste, particularly in reference to his brother [John Leng, now M.P. for Dundee]. The brothers seemed satisfied; the officials were really happy. I felt a little excited and somewhat pleased on the whole.

18th January.—Terrible surmises from Paris. A *coup d'état* feared, and then up goes Louis Nap into the air—and success to his flight to chaos! But who is to come after him? There's the rub.

The *National Review* has some very admirable articles—one on German philosophy from the pen of Martineau who writes in rather a desponding tone. He sees the chief result of German philosophy to be as yet negative and thinks the Bible in process of decomposition; still he thinks nothingness better than rottenness, and expresses hope that better times may turn up! It is to me meanwhile a terrible

thought that on both philosophy and religion there rests in capital letters the word DOUBT, and that there is a likelihood of this deepening for a considerable time to come. Jerusalem is at present compassed with armies, and perhaps its redemption may be so much the more near. Should Martineau's fears prove true, and no blessed hope arrive, where is our refuge? It must be, I think, in the moral nature of man—that true infinity, that morality that is in man, which creates religion and crowns itself with revelation, being itself a reflection of the moral nature of God. Should this fail,

“The pillared firmament is rottenness.”

But fail it cannot. Never let it be forgotten that the earliest utterance of Christ is His sermon on the Mount.

*19th January.* — Another gloomy, wretched day. Glad I have not to travel till to-morrow, when I go to preach in Manchester, having to start at seven morning. French affairs threatening, and so are Danish too this morning. One is tempted to say with Andrew Skurliewhitter in “Nigel,” “More blood—more blood!” Ay, there must be, and to the horse-bridles. All things are reaching toward that war of opinion which Canning foresaw and which shall terminate—when? Not perhaps till He comes whose right it is.

Surely Christ will yet do more for the world! No doubt, apart from those He saves, the principles He has implanted in the world have been most beneficial. But over what a limited area as yet! “He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.”

*22nd January.*—Left at seven A.M. Morning dark but brightened up beautifully at Stirling. At Carlisle it began to rain and rained heavily till I reached Manchester. Young Mr. Sidebottom met me at the train and drove me to his house. He is a pleasant young man and has been a great traveller on the Continent, in Greece, Syria, &c. His wife is a very fine woman, with grace in her carriage, and heart and soul in her eye. Met Parker [the Rev. Joseph Parker] at tea there. He is a tall, dark, striking looking man, frank, hurried in speech, and, I believe a rough, ready, powerful preacher. His church is the finest in Manchester and he is very proud of it. I think him fierce, impulsive, but with heart and pluck. On his vestry wall is a portrait of his distinguished predecessor, Dr. MacCall, who looks a nobleman, stately yet mild, with high intellect also expressed. The night was wet and the audience not so large on that account. It was respectable, however, and very attentive, made up a good deal of ministers, students from the college, &c. I read them "What is man?" calmly, and it seemed to tell. Yesterday called on MacKerrow and Ireland and had a little talk. Left at 2.20 and reached this at 12.30. Found M. with Marien and Mittannus [Mrs. Gilfillan with her two nieces] waiting. Rejoiced the two latter by giving them a collection of songs and "Gulliver's Travels" I had bought for them in Manchester. Have been writing letters all morning. Wrote sixty or seventy lines of "Night" on Tuesday evening.

*24th January.*—Lectured rather drily to-day on Elijah and Ahab meeting in the vineyard of Naboth.

In the afternoon on the "Prisoners of Hope." Spoke, 1st, of all men being prisoners bound by passions, appetites, difficulties, sins, &c., although like the lions in the Pilgrim's Progress the chains are not seen. Men differed principally in the weight of their chains, and the varieties of their woe. 2nd, of Hope. That little word hope was the entire gulf between earth and hell. Yet might not Dante be a driveler after all, in saying, "He that enters here must leave hope behind him." A hell with hope renewed at times to be for ever disappointed, rainbows rising, but the storm never coming to a close—that were a hell indeed. 3rdly, spoke of the ground of hope, the stronghold—the love of God authentically revealed in Christ; 4thly, of the duty of turning to Christ; and 5thly, of the completeness of liberation at the resurrection, and not till then. Quoted in the course of the sermon Sterne's picture of a captive (about the most pathetic thing in the English language). Renan has a curious query at p. 208 of his volume, "who knows if the highest term of progress after millions of ages may not evoke the absolute conscience of the universe, and in this conscience the awakening of all that has lived? A sleep of a million of years is not longer than that of an hour." I wrote on the 22nd of December the following lines in "Night," somewhat coincident with the sentiment quoted. The stars are supposed to sing:—

We move to skies so bright and warm with God  
That happiness shall drop like dew from heaven,  
That the dead dust of body-buried man  
Shall burst its cerements and be raised again,  
And Nature, Angels, God and man be one,  
Melted into one sea of endless peace,  
Communion conscious, and fruition high.



Be it so! Amen! But, alas, "we know in part and prophesy in part."

*26th January.*—Went to Broughty-Ferry, and at the close of D. Scroggie's lecture made some remarks on the lecturing mania of the day. All classes were lecturing, ministers, elders, editors, farmers, and even ladies, not content with their old prescriptive right to lecture within curtains and at unseasonable hours, had taken to lecturing on the boards and at seasonable hours. It was a curious fact or fatality, and we must make the best of it.

Cumming is getting it to-day from the *Saturday Review*. He does in many points deserve it. I am sick of all prophecy-mongers, and so will the public become more and more when they begin to understand really what prophecy is, how uncertain in its vaticinations, how certain in its moral foundations. Cumming's power over the country is a disgrace to it, though of course all the really intelligent and thoughtful care nothing for him. I was once bit, not by Cumming, but by the common notions about prophecy; but Coleridge and others have taught me a little more sense.

This day cold and cloudy. Go in the afternoon to Montrose to lecture, and expect W. Vallentine to drive me out to Arnhall where I intend to spend Wednesday.

*29th January.*—Lectured in Montrose. Guildhall overflowing. After it supped with Mr. Burns, Established minister there, a fine, genial, independent fellow, with good powers, very popular at present.

Had a pleasant moonlight ride to Arnhall and found all well. Enjoyed a quiet walk with James Vallentine through the woods, which looked serenely beautiful in a fine clear winter noon. Came home and dined, and then off to Linlithgow. What a glorious evening sky bent over the Comrie hills, with clouds of richest amber, and gleams of the yellowest gold lightening on the imperial foreheads of Ben Voirlich and Ben Ledi! Lectured to a large audience in the United Presbyterian Church. Slept at Mr. Watson, the Procurator Fiscal's, a pleasant elderly man who surely must wear everlasting white gloves on the bench, so mild is he, and who, if he did condemn a criminal, would do so in such tones that the poor fellow would think he was acquitting him. The view from his house is fine—Linlithgow with its lake, canal, and fine undulating country below, and the Ochils and Campsie hills in the distance. The sky in the late evening was most dazzlingly clear. Orion seemed one gem, and the stars of the plough dropping like full ripe fruit from heaven. Reached home at 1.30, very cold. Have written a few letters, and my forenoon's lecture.

Picked up *Macmillan* for February. Masson, while speaking feelingly of Thom of Inverury, ignores altogether the efforts Dundee (*magna pars fui*) made for his widow and family, and the monument that it erected over his remains.

30th January.—This is my birthday, I am to-day fifty-one.

*"Eheu! fugaces, Postume, Postume,  
Labuntur anni."*

I am not so miserable on birthdays as, like Swift, to read Job's curse on the day he was born ; but they always make me grave if not sad.

Read last night a capital paper in *Macmillan*, on India. It is written with a masterly pen, and corroborates all I said at the time of the Indian Mutiny. Let us never say a word about the barbarity of the Sepoys after our monstrous reprisals. The only crime latterly inquired into was the possession of a buck skin. Campbell's awful line is yet only half accomplished :—

“And blood for blood shall India's plains bedew.”

31st *January*.—Preached twice to-day. Lectured in the forenoon on Ahab preparing to go to Ramoth-Gilead. In conclusion spoke of the preciousness of peace. It never seemed so precious as when leaving us, just as a landscape never seemed so lovely as a few minutes before a storm came on to bury it in darkness. I prayed God to avert the omen from our land. I spoke of the lust of ambition found chiefly among those in whom every other lust was deadened, and of its pernicious consequences. I said that hitherto falsehood and the teachers of falsehood were in the majority. Falsehood was a great raging storm covering earth and sea, the teachers of truth a few sea-birds wailing out a feeble protest against it. But truth was immortal and would prevail.

In the afternoon preached on “Many crowns.” Christ had, first, the crown of thorns. Itself and its shame were gone ; but its memory and glory remain on His brow. Second, the crown of heaven which He received immediately after His ascension, and,

oh wonderful! forty-three days after His passion. Third, the crown of hell. Christ was the Lord of darkness as well as of light. He ruled hell with His justice, mercy, sympathy, discrimination, and power. Fourth, the crown of His church—the matrimonial crown. Woe to those popes and kings, who sought to wrest it from His forehead and put it on their own. Fifth, the crown of earth. This not His as yet, but it would and must be. Would Victoria endure that a paltry island like Wight or Skye should hold out against her arms and disown her authority? This was the exact position of the earth. But was it not a poor crown, that of this world? No! the earth was Christ's birth-place, life-place, death-place, burial-place, rendered dear to Him by many associations, and He valued its crown more than all the rest. Even as a rich man returns from abroad and, not satisfied with all his possessions there, must purchase at whatever expense his ancestral croft and dwelling, so Christ and this world. Sixth, the crown of the universe. Seventh, that of the sinner's heart. This was Christ's great ambition—"Son, daughter, give me thine heart." And even amidst the storms and terrible grandeurs of the second advent He will be still seeking this object. It is not said—Behold, the Lord of hosts cometh; or, behold, Jehovah the avenger cometh; but, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," to wed and glorify His bride, the Church.

*1st February.*—Fuller details of that shocking catastrophe in Chili. Two thousand women burnt. What a holocaust in honour of the immaculate conception of the Virgin! What a theme the whole



horrid transaction—in its mingled elements of “burning instead of beauty,” loveliness and love exchanged in one frightful instant for torture, in its colossal martyrdom of beauty and virgin innocence—for the pen of him who drew the ship-wreck in “Don Juan.” Blake, the painter, might have made a powerful picture entitled a flight of female souls from Santiago, contrasting with the blackened and disfigured corpses the lovely faces of the spiritual bodies, saddened by what they are leaving, but sweetly smiling in the prospect of their everlasting happiness.

Motley continues interesting, but is very melancholy reading. What wretched characters, full of the grossest inconsistencies, reminding you of Christian cannibals, baptized devils, abound—such as Philip and Don Carlos—and what bloody transactions and brutalities of all kinds! Piety and faith reel like twigs in a tempest as one reads these things and remembers that they are fair examples of the history of humanity and exist still. Yet against the blackness there stand out some clear and noble figures such as William the Silent. Even Alva, though a fiend, is a “superior fiend,” a giant among the pigmies of hell.

*2nd February.*—The Austro-Prussian army has crossed the Eider. The question now is, Will Britain be involved? I hope not; yet if her interference could be of service in rousing the Continent against its oppressors, and precipitating the deliverance of Hungary, Poland, and Venetia, I should rejoice, or at least, not grieve or remonstrate. Had a dream this morning which transported me back many years,

deliciously reminding me of some of the happiest days I ever spent. How strange the feeling in the morning of the impression of a dream, remaining even after the dream is gone, or when it is only half-remembered. Ere fully departing, it seems to linger like a load on your brain, heart, and very eyebrows, and perhaps noon is reached ere it

“Fade into the light of common day.”

How delightful, how real the intercourse in dreams with friends, either long dead or at least removed from you, whom you know you shall never meet on earth. One remembers the lines of Campbell :—

“In the dreaming land  
Shouldst thou to-morrow with thy mother meet,  
Go, tell her spirit that the white man’s hand  
Hath plucked the thorns of sorrow from thy feet.”

How tantalising to awake from a beautiful dream, probably at its intensest moment of delight, and to find nothing, or agony instead. How provoking to forget a delightful dream ; and how horrible a succession of evil dreams, to dip in and out and in again in an inky ocean of misery, till, when morning comes, it seems to have come too late, and to bring no relief on its wings.

To-day stormy, and cold winds wildly whistling. Go to Muir’s soiree at Newtyle in the evening. Curious fact : many ministers and others deplore my doing so much, frittering away my time, &c., and yet they have no objections that I should fritter it in their service. ’Tis a queer thing, human nature ; and I, probably, in the same circumstances, would do the same.

Dr. Taylor, of Glasgow [the Rev. James Taylor, LL.D., author of "Pictorial History of Scotland"], called, and cracked for nearly an hour this forenoon. Glib talker, with a spice of humour, with evidently great memory and powers of observation.

*3rd February.* — Wrote before going to Newtyle some lines of "Night" describing the solution of the great nebula in Orion. Found John Muir presiding over a good meeting. I gave the "Dangers," with a bit about the Santiago matter. David Young, of Kinclaven, gave a long, rambling, funny speech on the Tongue. Came home at ten o'clock. The hills around Newtyle, and the plains, too, were covered this morning with snow, and looked new and wildly beautiful. What a Divine disguise of nature snow is! How beautiful upon the mountains its feet of softness and silence! How the loveliness in it contends with and triumphs over its dreary and repulsive cold, and makes it one of the most poetical of things.

Have been glancing at "Balder." I had not opened it for ten years. It is a monstrous production, full of power, but the power contorted as in the wildest pictures of David Scott; the anatomy of feeling, wonderful in its minuteness, but weak also from the same cause, the subjective decidedly paramount throughout, the story painfully unpleasing and obscure as well, the best passages dragged in to glorify the poem instead of rising naturally from it. Dobell is unquestionably a man of high genius, and of a very generous character; I believe, a very good man. But he will not live by all he has yet done in poetry.

*5th February.*—Dined at Mr. Smith's, Broughty Ferry, yesterday. Mr. Ronald, Saltcoats, there, a fine genial, shrewd, old man, universally respected in our body. Met in the evening Middleton, Superintendent of Schools. He is not in such force as I have seen him, having been threatened with paralysis of the limbs. He is a very intelligent, clever, and conversable man.

The Queen's Speech is absolutely empty, wersh, revealing a Government given over to beggary, fed and feeding us on husks, not knowing one bit more than a blind pilot whither it is bound.

*7th February.*—Lectured to-day on Micaiah's prophecy, and preached on, "The Lord shall be One, and His name One." Said—1st, God is already One in essence, in purpose, in character, in glory, in the One Mediator; 2nd, He would yet appear more gloriously One; 3rd, He would possess One government. There is only, so far as we know, one spot in the universe which resists Him, the earth; and only one spot in that spot, the heart of man, and that spot must be subdued; 4th, His name is to be One. It is not so at present. He has many names—Seeva, Allah, Jehovah, and Jehovah-Jesus. No human means would ever make all nations accept only one of them. The Hindus, and Mussulmen, and Jews are as obstinately attached as ever to their own Gods. But it would be done in God's own time and way. Lectured in the evening on the Mustard Seed and the Leaven.



*12th February.*—Have returned from my journey to Galashiels, Lauder and Haddington. Did not set out till Tuesday at 6 A.M. The morning dark. Saw, however, at Leuchars the morning star, very red on account of the thickish atmosphere, but full and plump, and then about Kinghorn the great sun rose right out of the German Ocean. Reached Galashiels at 11 A.M. Drove at 2 P.M., to Bridgeheugh, where was a little party. Enjoyed it much. The most interesting person was old Mrs. Aird, Thomas's mother, a woman of eighty-five, yet full of life, sense, and observation, attentive to all that is going on, dropping, ever and anon, a shrewd observation which seems the more oracular, that it comes from a frame shaken with palsy. She is indeed Thomas's mother. Lectured to a full hall, and, I think, an appreciative audience. Next day went to Lauder, crossing the snow-covered moor from Stow. Excellent meeting. Came on to Edinburgh on Thursday forenoon and went to Haddington in the evening. Had a good house, but a slight hiss at a particular point about the Free and United Presbyterian Church Union. Saw old Mrs. Brown, and her daughter Violet. Felt a good deal about old times and poor Samuel. Mr. Whitelaw, of Athelstaneford, drove me out to his manse after lecture. He is a good, rather queer man, with considerable knowledge, fine sympathies and large ambition. He took me to see Blair's monument in the centre of the village. It is a simple, solid structure, like the poem it commemorates. I like Whitelaw. Came home *via* Perth at 5.15 P.M., and was met at the door by dear Mittannus.

*15th February.*—Had a letter to-day from an Oxford student named Frederick William Orde Ward, thanking me for my “History of a Man,” which, he says, has made an era in his life both intellectually and morally. That book, so unpopular in Scotland, has thus done good service at a distance. This youth met with it in the Isle of Wight. I think and always have thought that the world will find it after many days.

*17th February.*—Went north on Monday to Laurencekirk and lectured on “Signs of the Times” to a very crowded hall with as much energy and effect as I ever exerted anywhere I think. Enjoyed Beechwood House with the dear little Mags, Davies, Looneys, and Chatties exceedingly. Drove over on Tuesday to Bogmuir, and lectured at Fettercairn on Norway with somewhat less *éclat*. Colonel MacInroy was in the chair, a manly, soldier-like, business fellow, greatly respected in that quarter. Sir Thomas Gladstone spoke to me very civilly at the close. But I feel it a kind of shame that the opinion of such people, or their indifference should give me one moment’s consideration at this time of day. Went to Arnhall at night and enjoyed it as usual. Saw in the north memorials of the savage storm of Saturday. Reached home at four, and go to-night to a “curling supper” at Westfield. It is not exactly to my taste, but never mind.

*18th February.*—The supper and subsequents were enjoyable, with some drawbacks. These things never look wholly well on reflection. Far better a quiet crack and laugh by the dear fireside.

*19th February.*—Another hen-pie last night. Did not see much of it as I went down town to a meeting ; but the little I did see was rather pleasant. E. B., a gentle and interesting person, lost her husband twelve years ago by a flash of lightning and carries still in her eye and bearing the traces of that great sorrow. What a dread act of appropriation is that of the lightning when it “licks up the life of a man” and returns remorseless to the cloud.

There has been snow during the night. I go to-morrow to Sunderland, to preach anniversaries. This will be the third time there within two years. A year to-day since I began “Night.” Spent the evening at J. G.’s whose marriage anniversary it was. While at Westfield, glanced at Raleigh of London’s volume of sermons, entitled “Quiet Resting Places.” There is richness in the illustration and sweetness in the style ; the tone is semi-poetical, semi-practical ; the subjects all interesting, some of them sensational. The whole is pleasant and should be profitable reading, but there is little evidence of profound thought or peculiar experience. He skims over the mysteries of things with the light-glancing wing of a swallow, and never runs the risk of being drowned while searching the depths. He always seems to satisfy himself, and the man who does that seldom satisfies others. Yet he is a good and to a considerable extent an able and eloquent man.

*25th February.*—Returned from my expedition. Got to Sunderland by half-past eight, Saturday. Preached three times next day to good audiences ; lectured to a large and highly intelligent audience on

Monday, James Everett in the chair. Went to South Shields on Tuesday and lectured there to a tolerable audience. People kind. Saw a glorious sky on Saturday.

*3rd March.*—The report of the Committee on the Free and U.P. Church Union is published to-day. They agree in giving the magistrate certain vague powers over the Sabbath and the fixing of fast-days, but differ materially about his power in endowing religion. This, I trust, will form a sufficient bulwark to keep them apart.

*4th March.*—Kind letter from Logan to-day. Tells me an interesting story of Dr. Anderson. Some preachers were sneering at my "History of a Man." Anderson quietly took down the book, and read the account of my mother till he burst into tears, and then said: "Till ye can appreciate that, far less equal it, ye should hold your tongues!" Well done, good brave Willy!

*5th March.*—What a 'queer dream I had this morning about Professor Nichol and Samuel Brown. What a fine dark mountain lake I saw, with white bubbles on it, like—as I thought I said to Nichol—"like specks of spate on a river"! Began my paper on "Chalmers and Arnold," but only wrote a few sentences. Must go at it tooth and nail on Tuesday. I intend considering their diversity of power and unity of purpose, their difference of culture, their



mission to intensify and liberalise Christianity, their power over the young mind of the age, and the energy—the *unmeasuredness*—of their life; shall speak of their relation to the Church, non-partyish, progressive, reverent yet daring, and close with some remarks on our present state, similar to those in my Sabbath evening sermon.

“Night” has for some time been thrown aside.

You can read nothing of Robertson [F. W.] without some pleasure and profit, but they are publishing too much of him, as they do of all celebrated men. He is very helpless on regeneration and the Trinity. The latter he tries to illustrate by material images, such as three rays of light mingling in one—as if any material thing could do aught but caricature spiritual mysteries—and as if the man who, after such an analogy, supposed himself to understand the Trinity were not a fool! As to regeneration, he justly scouts the identification of it with baptism, and also its necessary suddenness, but lays too much stress upon the command he supposes it to give to the spirit over the body—(not to the spirit over the spirit). . . . His view of regeneration is altogether shallow, one-sided, and unworthy of him.

*8th March.*—Supped last night at Mr. Knight's. Small party; only B., J. G., and myself. Conversation less controversial and more agreeable than on former occasions [owing, in part, to good resolutions framed by G. G. beforehand]. Both these young divines are remarkably well read, better than I and my contemporaries were at their time of life. Training has greatly improved, especially in theological directions.

As a youth I read ravenously in general literature, but not so systematically as I ought in philosophy or theology. Knight is highly cultured and imaginative; B. has a strong and logical mind. We talked about Cause and Effect, Monism, &c., till one in the morning. I made some stand for Monism against Dualism; but really it is not easy attacking or defending either of them. I can *conceive* the body existing without the soul, as a clod; I cannot conceive the soul existing without body at all; but is my conception a certain test of fact? Surely a separate soul *may* exist? Yet there are moments when you seem to feel yourself an integer—soul and body intensely one.

*9th March.*—The day is bright but cold. I feel no inclination to write, though I have a great deal to do ere I complete "Chalmers and Arnold" to my mind. To-day the world seems an unutterable weariness. These varying moods—what a curse they have been to my existence! To-day, however, my feeling comes mainly from bile.

I feel painfully this morning how little I have done to purpose and how much more I could have done. Whether from profession, carelessness, or peculiarity of opinions, or want of due culture, or of tact, or of properly concentrating myself, my position is not what it ought to have been by this time; and, worse still, I have no hope, or little, of materially making it better. I feel reluctant now to shift my ground, and altogether I do not look on the state of my affairs with a very bright eye. However, God help me to labour on. If I suffer myself to lose heart and

to become indolent, it's all up. Besides, there is always something to encourage me.

11th March.—Was asked yesterday to give a lecture in Newcastle at the Shakespeare celebration, but owing to my previous engagement here, declined. . . . Islay Burns was, by the casting vote of the Moderator, recommended by the Dundee Presbytery the other day to be theological professor in Glasgow. There are, however, prejudices against him as rather too liberal and advanced.

12th March.—Went to St. Andrews yesterday and lectured to a very crowded house. Enjoyed Dr. Park very much. He is æsthetical, cultured, and genial. His niece, a sister of Allan Park Paton of Greenock, is a most accomplished person. She is intimate with Dinah Muloch, and knows Alexander Smith and the Dobells. They were exceedingly hospitable and kind. Saw one or two of the professors. One Campbell, recently come to the Greek chair, seems a fine fellow. He lectures next week on Shakespeare and Milton. We had a good deal of literary talk. Dr. Park is a great admirer of Shelley, and has even set some of his lyrics, such as the "Hymn to Pan," to music. He was talking of Tulloch, Ferrier, and others.

A spirited paper to-day in the *Advertiser* exposing the Oxford Convocation for their shabby conduct to Jowett. They have refused to raise his salary as professor of Greek from £40 to £400. It has been done chiefly by the "conies" of the Evangelical Party. We have plenty of the same silly sort in

Scotland. How freely one breathes in an atmosphere like that of last night's society, so full of intelligence, liberality, and genial feeling.

16th March.—Returned this afternoon from Musselburgh and Dalkeith. I left on Monday at 1 P.M., and had a calm passage. G. B. met me at Edinburgh. Still the old kind fellow, with all his faults. Lectured at Musselburgh; the night wet and windy, but the audience good. Went to sup at Dr. Scott's, the son-in-law of Delta. Delta's daughter is a delightful person, tall, sweet-looking, simple, an unconscious angel. All her father in her shines. Her husband is a fine fellow. Went yesterday to Inveresk Church and saw the fine view commanded by it of the Firth, the Pentlands, the Ochils, Arthur's Seat, and the level lands surrounding Musselburgh. The day was one cold but beautiful smile. Went on to Dalkeith and lectured to a large audience in the Corn Exchange Hall. Altogether a pleasant visit.

19th March.—Finished my lecture on "Chalmers and Arnold" the other night. *Valeat quantum.*

Yesterday went and gave my speech to the chimney-sweeps, about seventy in number, who cut rather a respectable figure. They received it very well.

Have written the half of a sermon on "The voice of the Lord is on the waters," with a passing allusion to the Sheffield catastrophe.

Went in the afternoon for a drive with F. H. as far as Inchtute. The wind was easterly, but the ride, on the whole, pleasant. Some interesting and painful



reminiscences connected with that road. Used to go it often to Pitrodie in the old Tom Nicol days. [See "History of a Man," under Nicholas Thom.] Had not traversed the road for seventeen years. Everything new and yet unchanged. What terrible things strong memories are!—long and life-lasting multiples of existence.

*20th March.*—Preached yesterday on "The voice of the Lord upon the waters"—namely, the sea, the rivers, earth's revolutions and wars, men's opinions, the future crisis. Church very full. Speaking of opinions, described them as four winds blowing upon the great sea. 1st, Those who cling to every "if" and "and" of the past; 2nd, those who would destroy it as a whole; 3rd, those who expected a new revelation of a supernatural kind; and, 4th, those who were eclectics, wishing to unite the merits of all systems into a new whole.

*23rd March.*—Twenty-eight years to-day since I was ordained here. How long yet short it looks. Awoke to-day remembering some passages of my past life which were peculiarly pleasant; and

"Sick of the present, I turned to the past;"

and yet not for worlds would I live over even some of the dearest passages of the past again.

Have been annoyed at times of late by a feeling of hopelessness about myself, and others, and things in general. Hopelessness is worse than despair. Despair hurries to a crisis and reaction. Hopelessness sits

still on your shoulder, like the shadow of that "Raven" of Poe's, and will neither go nor darken deeper. What is the use of this waste of splendour, this superfluity of glory, shining on worms? Grant the utmost breadth and depth of hell, as commonly conceived—for punishing sin and redressing grievances—it only makes the matter worse, it only secures the normal continuance and increase of sin and evil, it turns redress into revenge, it excites sympathy for sin, it turns God's triumph into an act of supreme selfishness, and makes human misery yield the largest (so far as we know) share of His revenue of glory. But these thoughts are too dark and terrific to be dwelt on long. Good is ; and let us hope that Good shall yet reign.

*31st March.*—Returned from my Glasgow and Comrie jaunt. I reached Glasgow at 6.15 on Saturday, and drove to the Jeffreys. Found M. [Mrs. Gilfillan] there before me. Pleasant evening. Preached twice in Regent Street Church. Many recollections of old times. I had sat there when a boy-student under Dr. Heugh. I saw the old seat, and could fancy myself in my red gown vibrating towards it. Preached to large audiences ; and, especially in the afternoon, with uncommon force and freedom for me. Got from two or three individuals of influence an offer of the place, but put them off without committing myself. Went to Logan's with Mrs. Gilfillan to tea. He is recovering from an accident, but still confined to the house. Lectured in Jeffrey's to a vast throng, hundreds going away. Subject, "Heaven and earth shaken." On Monday went out to Clydeview and

saw my brother. Met R. Jeffrey at 3 P.M., lunched, and off to Comrie. The valley was looking wintry, but grand. Spoke at Crieff at a centenary soiree, which passed off well. Altogether an interesting journey.

*3rd April.*—Did some thirty lines of "Night" on Friday—subject, "The Centre of the Universe." Preached to-day in the afternoon on, "We preach Christ." 1st, A whole Christ; 2nd, a personal Christ; 3rd, a crucified Christ; 4th, a Christ against whom there were prejudices; 5th, a coming Christ and a coming Christianity. Lectured in the evening in continuation of "The Sower." Audience very large. In conclusion, speaking of the reasonableness of religion, quoted a noble passage from Chalmers' "Astronomical Discourses."

*9th April.*—This is a beautiful day, bright, and with that fine spring softness of feeling, and warmth of breeze, which used to be so delightful. How enthusiastically I used to quote the words of Emerson about spring bringing

"Life's sunshine and desire;  
And from mount and meadow  
Breathes aromatic fire."

But now much of this is gone, perhaps never to return.

Poor Alaric A. Watts is dead. I knew him by correspondence, and he was a warm friend of mine. He was an elegant poet, a man of fine taste, long the

editor of the *Literary Souvenir*, altogether, a capital specimen of his class—latterly, I fear, poor.

11th April.—Returned to-day from Aberdeen. Enjoyed my visit very much, on the whole, although I felt spiritless all my northern way. George Jamieson met me at the train and drove me to his house. He is an acute, sagacious, well-read man. His niece, Miss Gray, is a superior person, comely in look, frank in manner, with decidedly literary tastes. On Saturday evening preached to a very large audience for a Saturday, and on Sabbath evening to a crowd. Felt a good deal about old times, remembering 1837, when I assisted old Mr. Templeton, now in his grave, and Sedgewick, now in Nova Scotia. That was a delightful little time. I spent six days with Sedgewick, and saw all in and about Aberdeen, its fine streets and houses of serene and unchangeable granite; its colleges, rivers, sea-shore, and that “Balgownie’s brig’s black wa’” over which, when a boy, Byron used to lean, with a strange childish delight. One or two of the elders of that time are still alive, fine hale octogenarians, and they gave me a most cordial welcome. I greatly admire, and even love, the city, and could wander about its streets and rivers continually.

13th April.—Went yesterday to the jubilee soiree of Mr. Lamb of Errol. Did not go till the evening, and enjoyed a delicious solitary walk from the station to the village. The young moon was lifting up her horns high in heaven; the evening was serene; the



clouds amber; and the sun setting in the most dazzling and pointed glory. I felt loath to quit such a temple, even for Errol Established Church, where erst Caird thundered musically, and where I found a large audience assembled to do honour to my worthy friend. Old Mr. Young, of Logiealmond, was finishing his speech. What a wonderful veteran he is! settled sixty-four years, some eighty-seven of age, and still hale, fresh, with a ringing voice, animated action, and a youthful aspect altogether astonishing. I stared, and thought—In thirty-seven years, if I live, I shall be as old, but will I be as strong and fresh? Not likely. I seemed almost to see my father, Young's old friend and companion, risen from the death of thirty-eight years. Then followed various handsome presentations and little speeches, including my own of fifteen minutes. After soiree came supper in Lamb's manse; and then we Dundonians started for the midnight mail. Enjoyed the walk and talk up the Carse and in the train very much—Drs. Robson, Eadie, and MacEwen were there. Howatt was very pleasant on the road home.

*18th April.*—Communion yesterday, Dr. R. Jeffrey assisting. Never, I think, did I preach better. For the day, its large attendance, and the attention given, *Laus Deo*. Dr. Jeffrey preached with energy last night, but I preferred his lecture to-day on Christ's walking on the sea, which was plain, pointed, and striking.

*22nd April.*—Not very much has occurred since

I made the last entry. The Jeffreys went home on Wednesday, greatly pleased, I think, with their visit. We had a supper party last night. Read them a good deal of "Night"—Pilatus, *et cetera*—which they professed to like vastly. . . . Have begun my speech on Shakespeare for the Tercentenary. Have another to give on the same subject in Blairgowrie, on Wednesday, to undertake which I have been almost forced.

24th April.—Lectured to-day on Elisha and the minstrel. Described him sitting in his tent, the three kings bending before him, he not taking the trouble to rise till, the minstrel playing, he sprang to his feet and was attired

"In sudden brightness, like a man inspired."

In afternoon, preached on "My sheep follow Me"—1st, by preferring Christ to every other teacher, while admitting the merits of others; 2nd, believing Christ's veracity as well as His other virtues; 3rd, trusting in His death; 4th, obeying His law; 5th, imitating His example; and 6th, persevering to the very end. Was rather short but, perhaps, impressive enough. Redeliver my lecture on "Chalmers and Arnold," in James' Church to-night. Good story about Rev. ———, for whose behalf I gave it in Edinburgh. Some time before it was delivered, he asked a friend of mine very earnestly, *sotto voce*, "By the way, can you tell me who Arnold was?" I fear a good many of my audience to-night will be in a similar predicament.

Gave my lecture. House crowded.

*28th April.*—The Shakespearean celebration, on the 26th, passed off well. There was a large, though not crowded, attendance—a good specimen, I think, of the intelligence of Dundee. Went yesterday to Blairgowrie to a smaller edition of the same. Read an old lecture on Shakespeare, with fully more effect than the speech in Dundee.

F. H. drove Helen and me out and in, and we enjoyed the drive. Went up last night to the old church of Blairgowrie, which stands on an eminence, commanding a fine view of the windings of the Ericht, the village, the wood-embosomed houses, the scattered clumps of trees, the swelling braes, as yet, however, red and bare. The view in the grey morning to-day, coming down the glen from D. S.'s house, also delightful; and so the ride homeward, along the hill toward Newtyle, with the great strath, shorn, however, by mist of its mountains, spread map-like below.

The Synod of Angus and Mearns has recommended Burns by a large majority. Murray Mitchell's speech is from his point of view able and good.

*29th April.*—Another bright day, half-frost, half-fire kind of a day. Logan is enamoured of my Shakespeare speech and sends me Hedderwick's in exchange, which, like himself, is genial, catholic, classical.

I have this week read "Cymbeline." It is not the happiest effort of Shakespeare's genius and betrays, I am tempted to think, here and there an inferior hand. But there is all the lavish wealth of thought and imagery; there are the inimitable touches of nature; there are the fine sketches of mountain life; and there

is, best of all, the scene in the bed-chamber of Imogen. Never was such a delicate matter so delicately handled, not even in Tennyson's "Godiva," or Keats' "Eve of St. Agnes." Shakespeare must have witnessed a similar scene with his own eyes. How generous he is too, to Iachimo at the close. He spares his life, nay, seems to accept his repentance. On the other hand, the story is clumsy, the plot contemptible, the king a noodle, and the vision of Posthumus fantastic and uninteresting.

*2nd May.*—Hedderwick has a nice little paper in the *Glasgow Citizen* on the "Conversion of the Clergy to Shakespeare," in which he kindly alludes to me. Curious dialogue here the other day:—"Were you at the Tercentenary?" "No; I don't wish to encourage a licentious writer like Shakespeare." "Did you ever read him?" "Never." "What then is your ground for thinking him licentious?" "Oh! it's the general opinion!"—And so, I dare say, it is with the humbugs of the age.

Read a good deal of Renan over yesterday. He is not the shallow declaimer or mere describer that many give him out to be. He is full of principles of sagacious philosophy, with a singularly clear and candid view of the particular period; and his enthusiasm for Christ is very ardent and sincere.

Yesterday, though a lively day with me throughout in the pulpit, was dull in private, not miserable but quietly sad. How well I remember this day (of the week) eighteen years ago, the undue and fey-like elation of the forenoon, the miserable failure of the evening. What a strange, wild summer that of 1846



was! Some passages of it came back on me yesterday with a painful yet pleasing vividness. When at Blairgowrie lately I remembered with great distinctness my visit there in October of that year, my walk up from Coupar-Angus on Saturday in the lull of a tempest which had been raging all night, the road covered with broken branches and fallen trees; then the heavenly quiet of the Sabbath morning shining on the gorgeous leaves of autumnal decay; my walk down that beautiful valley of the Ericht in the evening, with the golden light gleaming on the golden trees, and the new moon rising so sweetly, and to me so hopefully in the south-east; my ride in the coach to Coupar-Angus on the Monday, a strong frost having come and suspended large icicles, like glorious ear-drops, to the houses' eaves, and my solitary walk the next day *via* the beautiful Kirk of Liff from Newtyle to Dundee, carrying the little volume of Washington Irving I had bought at Blairgowrie with me and reading it on the road. I had newly recovered from a fit of half-maddening misery; and the excursion gave me the feelings of one just out of a fever. I felt that happiness was again possible to me, which, a week before, I had doubted. The week after I went over to a gathering in Edinburgh which I called the Great Philosophic Feed [banquet of the Philosophical Society], where Macaulay, Whately, Wilson, and a whole host of celebrities were to be present—to feed and to roar. How well I remember all the particulars of that queer journey! I went on to Edinburgh with my good dear brother-in-law, George Vallentine, now in Australia, and dined in Samuel Brown's, where, sooth to say, I was not in the best tune or temper. I *troked* about Edinburgh for a day or two till the feed came off, and

can remember going into a coffee-house with Tom Knox [Dr. Thomas Knox], then my special crony, and reading him part of my second "Foster," one half of which I had just written. Went to the feed and was close to Brown when he was put down [his speech being distasteful to the company]. The speaking was, for the men, poor—Macaulay's big-mouthed talk, Whately's clumsy and carelessly given commonplace, Wilson's twaddle, with none of his peculiar power, the rest beneath notice except Brown, whose speech promised to be splendid. I had read it, by the way, in the morning in proof, garnished by the printer with "loud cheers," "the learned gentleman sat down amidst universal cheers!" This was exceedingly rich. I was unutterably miserable when Brown was getting such treatment, and intensely indignant afterwards. I went down on Friday morning to Granton to go home, but having suddenly changed my mind, I strode along the shore to Leith, went into a coffee-room, ordered pen, ink and paper, and in three or four hours dashed off a short pamphlet attacking the meeting in the most savage style, and commenting with special severity on the treatment of Brown. This I carried up to his lodgings and read to him at tea. We thought of publishing it separately, but changed our minds, and it was ultimately sent to Aird who printed some portions of it in the *Dumfries Herald*. It was one of my very best things. With what savage satisfaction I wrote it, notwithstanding the noise in the place. Next day I came home flat as a flounder, and had the queerest feeling of nervousness on the following Sabbath. Yet I got on well. Then came a calm to my misery, and in that *chiaroscuro* I finished "Foster," counting it half-inspired.

It was the late flower of that most melancholy and chequered year—the year, however, to which my memory most frequently recurs.

A terrible snow-storm came early in 18— and during it I wrote in a fierce unhappy spirit, first, my paper on Crabbe, which seems hot and fiery, but of which I might say with Milton that—

“The ground burns frore,  
And cold performs the effect of fire ;”

and, second, a paper for *Macphail* on Dr. —, which was not printed. All this while, I was writing papers in *Tait*, *Hogg's Instructor*, &c., and beginning to entertain the project of the “Bards of the Bible,” reading the while some stiff thoughtful books, such as “Brown's Philosophy,” and with hope still rising before me like a fiery column, “the dark side not yet turned.”

*6th May.*—Have knocked off three or four bad poets by letter. One young man, a member of my own church, has a prose thing on Craighall with touches of fancy which show promise. I wish I had preserved a complete list of all the books and MSS. sent me since 1846 when I became known as a critic, with brief notes of their authors' character, &c. It were a queer, motley collection, a regular Noah's ark of all kinds of clean and unclean animals—eagles, lions, owls, asses, serpents, and a few vermin for variety. I have this week to write a preface to my friend Whitelaw [of Athelstaneford's] book.

THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.





## CHAPTER VI.

### PROGRESS OF THOUGHT.

SUMMING up the impressions of the year 1854, Mr. Gilfillan says:—"It was a disastrous year to me on the whole. My good old mother died on the 8th of May; my congregation was disturbed; and Aytoun and his allies commenced a furious battery of abuse and detraction. The same year I published a third 'Gallery.'" The first of these events is dwelt upon in terms of the deepest filial sorrow in the letters of the time to Mr. Dobell and Mr. Aird. The third matter requires some explanation. The "battery" was opened in Aytoun's satirical tragedy of "Firmilian," and in *Blackwood's Magazine* where opportunity was found for an attack on Mr. Gilfillan as chief advocate of the new poets. "Firmilian," long kept under lock and key by Professor Wilson, was produced during his last over-clouded days, and the pages of allusive and certainly not brilliant banter thrown into *Blackwood* were no doubt intended to second the passage in "Firmilian" where Mr. Gilfillan figures as Apollodorus and his literary life is dramatically quenched. It was to this attack Mr. D. G. Rossetti referred in a letter to Mr. Hall Caine:—"Gilfillan was a much better man intellectually

and morally than Aytoun, who tried to do for him." \*

Aytoun succeeded in his main object ; he raised the laugh of the polite world, and it was felt keenly as we know from many of Gilfillan's letters ; but we also know that the worst attacks cost him little more than a night's sleep, and that he felt the ecclesiastical far more than the literary conflict. As a minister in Dundee, he fought his way to a great success ; as a minister in the church of his fathers he would fain have had a position of trust and regard. The resolution against him of influential religious persons was what hurt most the warm heart of Mr. Gilfillan.

On both sides he wins the verdict now. The intellectual and moral power of which Mr. Rosetti speaks raises Gilfillan's name high in the Scottish Church and places him, as a literary man, far above most of those whose writings appeared with his in the periodicals of the day. Open one of the *Eclectic* or *Critic* volumes and presently you are asking in astonishment, what pen is this, what voice breaks with such force out of the ranks ? As Dr. Vaughan said in his admirable review of the Second Gallery, "Gilfillan's ideas no sooner become his than they pass into *sensible species* ; you hear them and see them. . . . His force is manifestly dependent on his freedom." To the young man, the unconventional man, it was new life to see one ranging the field like that ; to the conventional he seemed far too hot for literature, far too free for religion. But who of the former class could help turning first to Gilfillan's papers

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\* "Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rosetti," by T. Hall Caine, p. 195.

in any magazine, even when such a writer as "Atticus," more comprehensive, more trained, appeared side by side with him? The fire, the glow, the life, are all his.

The personal dispute with Aytoun is of the past. The larger point of quarrel, however, enters deeply into the life of the Scottish people. And it cannot be doubted that Gilfillan's fervent little volume on the Covenanters helped to stir afresh the old spirit which Aytoun scorned. It was his most popular work. Simply written, and with a whole heart, by one who could boast that he was descended from a martyr of Dunottar, it went straight to the soul of the country. Published towards the close of 1852, it was in its fifth thousand in 1853, and went on selling for a score of years. Against the persecutors its verdict is stern, sternest of all against Graham of Claverhouse; and Aytoun, as his eulogist, is not spared. "Claverhouse lies in the church of Blair-Athol, but we do not think that Aytoun's 'Burial March' has consecrated his tomb or drawn many pilgrims to weep over it. 'The memory of the wicked shall rot;' and over the grave of Clavers, as over that of every hard-hearted man, the crown of crime seems to sit shadowy on the turf, and the feet of devils may be fancied to dance above the sod that covers him. Shall we substitute for the empty grandiloquence of Pitcairn's epitaph the following true and simple words, which a thousand ghosts might rise from the moors to attest?—'Here lies one who believed not in God but in his sword—not in man but in his banner—who, as it was said of Cæsar, that he went with sobriety to the ruin of his country, shed the blood of his fellowmen as coolly as if he had been shedding water—who never trembled nor blushed when



alive, but who would have blushed had he foreseen what fooleries of admiration were to be perpetrated by his partisans—that Pitcairn was to compose his epitaph, and Aytoun to chant his funeral ode.’”

The publication of Nichol’s edition of the “Poets” began in 1853, and terminated in 1860, when forty-eight volumes had been issued. The series included all the masters, from Chaucer to the modern period, and had wide circulation and acceptance. From first to last Mr. Gilfillan acted as editor. To the works or examples of each author he prefixed a short biography, adding, in many cases, a separate essay on the genius of the poet. Some volumes contain three distinct articles. The labour, though congenial, was great, and often done under conditions that were in no small degree disconcerting. Remote from libraries, Mr. Gilfillan had to be contented with sources of information that could not be thoroughly tested. It is therefore not wonderful that the biographical sketches are sometimes imperfect. The critical dissertations, however, have the same power and perception that mark the “Literary Portraits.”

The edition opened with Milton, whose life is sketched in some three-and-twenty pages, in a lucid, though by no means striking, way. After this came Thomson, Herbert, Young, and Goldsmith; and the sequence of the succeeding volumes will be found in the list of publications at the close of the present work. Among the last was Swift, the notice of whom is praised by Rosetti for its great force and eloquence. From the essay on the “Genius and Poetry of Robert Burns” the following sentences may be taken:—

“Not the least remarkable of the characteristics of the songs of Burns is their variety of subject and of mood. The whole heart of Scottish life is reflected in them, as well as the poet's own entire history. Scottish love and courtship, domestic felicity and infelicity, jealousies and rivalships, humours, eccentricities and sorrows, virtues and vices, loyalty to King George and loyalty to King James, the scenery of both Highlands and Lowlands, all the seasons of the year and all the divisions of the day, the joys which surround the cradle, the mirth which rings about the marriage, and the grief that weeps by the deathbed and the grave, beauty and deformity, the hopes, disappointments, raptures, and despairs of his own bosom, are all included in the Shakespearean songs of Burns, who has, in these more than in any of his writings, discovered the vast width of his sympathies. . . . The great objection to his poetry is, after all, the same which we brought against his life—it has no pervading purpose and no consecrating moral. It is neither entirely ‘of the earth, earthy,’ nor is it thoroughly ethereal. The author's mind acts simply as a mirror, reflecting now the grossest, now the most beautiful objects—now the dunghill before his own door, and now the evening star of his Mary in the orange west—now the petty pandemonium of a ‘Poosie Nansie's,’ and now the little heaven of a pious rustic's fireside. . . . We close this estimate of Burns by simply expressing again feelings of deepest sorrow and pitying love. . . . We have wished to blend pity and blame in severe and equal proportions as the true libation over his dust.” The article on Burns in the “Gallery” may be mentioned as a clear, calm piece of critical portraiture.

The task of editing the "Poets" once begun, Gilfillan held on strenuously to the end. Along with his labour as a pastor this editorship might have been supposed enough for any man, and perhaps ought to have satisfied his appetite for work. But it scarcely absorbed a half of his intellectual vigour. His "Fatherhood of God" was published in 1854; his "History of a Man" in 1856; his "Christianity and our Era" in 1857; and in 1860 "Alpha and Omega," a collection of Scripture studies filling two volumes. In addition to all these were his contributions to magazines—*Hogg's Instructor*, third series; *Titan*, which followed in 1856; the *Eclectic*; the *Critic*; and the *Scottish Review*, a quarterly, in almost every number of which he was heard from January, 1853, to its close. For industry this period of Gilfillan's life rivals the most productive in any literary career. And his books and articles were read. While the attacks upon him had their effect, and whispers of this and that rebuff were relished in certain circles, he kept his hold on the awakening mind of the country. "You shall send 'Abijah' to Gilfillan," said a friend to a young poetess in England in 1854. "I stared," she says, "gasped, protested—Gilfillan, who lashed the *Athenæum* the other day for the review of 'Balder' in such a terrible style, that every stroke makes even a spectator writhe." But his was the one coveted verdict, and the poem went, with hosts of others, to have kind notice in due course.

At this time Mr. Gilfillan was in constant correspondence with Mr. J. Stanyan Bigg of Ulverston, whom he had encouraged to publish the poem "Night and the Soul." His friendly pen was also moving on

behalf of Mr. Gerald Massey, another of those who partly owed to him their hearing in the literary world. In a letter to Mr. Bigg, of 25th May, 1854, Mr. Gilfillan says: "Your poem must work its way. You will find my review in next *Hogg* pretty long, favourable, and honest. I am glad Landor has written you in so generous a spirit. I have it in contemplation to write for the *Eclectic* a review of you, 'Balder,' and Massey. That Review, however, has lately changed proprietors and editor, which may delay its appearance a little. Poor Aytoun! He seems in a sad quandary with me, Smith, and 'Balder.' Your poem will add fuel to his fire of fury. 'Tis a low, vulgar, spiteful, although rather amusing and cleverish paper. . . . Such things do immense mischief to the magazine, and none at all to the assailed authors. A few such onsets on 'Night and the Soul' would do it much good.

"The critics of London are verily a peculiar people, redeemed from insignificance partly by their multitude and principally by their malignity. . . . The men of the — are as *wee* as they are wicked. Heaven help literature, say I, if such are to be acknowledged its potentates. But their power is nearly over.

"You must in your next poem give us more incident, and compress a good deal. I have given you some good advices on that score in *Hogg*."

To the same correspondent he writes in the following August:—"I have had your letter forwarded me. The review in the *Eclectic* is not mine. It is favourable, but not very suggestive or discriminating. Still you might be better of seeing it. Authors are always better of seeing all reviews, unless the helplessly puffatory or malignantly abusive."



Returning to Mr. Gilfillan's own books. The next in order, "The Grand Discovery ; or, the Fatherhood of God," is a small volume, an expanded sermon. With some faults of style and argument it is, on the whole, calmly reasoned, and takes a comprehensive view of the subject. "God elects in sovereignty, and sovereignty means not acting from mere caprice, or in opposition to justice, but 'giving none account of any of His matters' at present ; acting with the dignity and reticence of a monarch who does not choose to reveal his secrets save at the time and in the manner he sees fit, but whose character is enough to show that his secrets are all holy secrets, and his mysteries mysteries of godliness."

The "Third Gallery of Literary Portraits," which appeared in 1854, was made up as follows :—

1. A File of French Revolutionists (from *Hogg's Instructor*) :—Mirabeau ; Marat, Robespierre, and Danton ; Vergniaud ; Napoleon.

2. A Constellation of Sacred Authors :—Edward Irving (a second paper) ; Isaac Taylor ; Robert Hall ; Hamilton, of Leeds ; Jameson, of Methven ; Dr. Chalmers.

3. A Cluster of New Poets :—Yendys ; Smith ; Bigg ; Massey.

4. Modern Critics :—Hazlitt and Hallam ; Jeffrey and Coleridge ; Delta ; Spalding ; Thackeray (from *Scottish Review*) ; Macaulay (from *Critic* of three years before).

5. Miscellaneous Sketches :—Carlyle and Sterling (from *Eclectic*) ; Emerson ; Neale and Bunyan ; Edmund Burke ; Poe ; Bulwer (from *Scottish Review*) ; Disraeli ; Smibert and the Highlands ; Wilson ; Rogers ; Æschylus (from *Palladium*) ; Shakespeare (from *Macphail*).

An edition of seven hundred and fifty copies of this "Third Gallery" was published to begin; and the last edition of the "Galleries," which followed in 1857, comprehended the whole in two volumes. In this final redaction certain papers of the first and second series were omitted, and the articles were rearranged so as to come under five divisions:—Poets, French Revolutionists, Novelists, Critics and Miscellaneous Writers, and Sacred Authors. The omissions deserve notice. The article on Thomas Carlyle in the first "Gallery" is entirely dropped. The two articles on Emerson in the first and second series are suppressed, and a new paper inserted, so stringent in tone, that it may be called an attack. It was manifestly impossible, in view of the publication of "Christianity and our Era," to allow the early eulogies of Carlyle and Emerson, guarded though they were at many points, to reappear. With these exceptions, however, all the important papers were given.

"The History of a Man" is the next work that calls for special notice. Mr. Gilfillan hoped great things for it, and it proved his great disappointment. Issued by Messrs. Arthur Hall, Virtue & Co., of London, in March, 1856, the book began its career with peculiar disadvantages, affecting Scottish and also English readers. It was to the publishers, Hogg, and Nichol, Scotland had learned to look for Gilfillan's work. For English readers, again, the book was too Scottish in its prevailing notes; and, while it had great merits and power, it had salient faults. It is, on the whole, clearly an autobiography—no one could suppose it a fiction—and yet there are fictitious elements that would puzzle any reader.

Real names, pseudonyms, and initials are introduced, the real names mostly those of well-known men, the fictitious either impenetrable or so transparent that the disguise is useless. The geography, too, is a confusion. But, chiefly, there was this fault, that to anyone at all acquainted with the author's history, some of the conversations were improbable, and others manifestly impossible. Mr. Gilfillan prided himself on these conversations, which he always believed would be taken as imaginary. They were partly in the style of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, though quite without coarseness, partly adventured upon under cover of Landor's. But, although clever, and in places even brilliant, they lack interest. Few people minded what Carlyle might be supposed to have said under certain circumstances when so much of his own inimitable work was at hand. Wilson and Chalmers were more easily imitated, yet the verisimilitude does not satisfy. Now-a-days the popular novel serves up the real under cover of fiction; but readers need not trouble themselves about identification; the character answers the purpose of the tale, although the original is either not known or not sought under the mask. The "History of a Man" is not a novel; it has no plot; and the conversations are mere exercises in imitation; they have no bearing on the progress of the book.

Again, the small mysteries of dashes and inverted initials were baffling, and discovery brought little or no reward, at anyrate to the English reader. A great mystery is enjoyed; but these little riddles, which cannot be guessed, only tire and irritate one. At the same time the book has a singular power diffused throughout. It opens with several chapters of auto-

biography, which, when the thin veil is removed, are worthy to take rank with any work of the kind in our language. The writing is free and strong, full of truth, and equally of imagination. As we read, we see the "remote laddie" on his way through the mystical world of books, and dreaming his dreams among the hills. As a literary confession it deserves to be much better known than it ever has been. Throughout the volume, too, there are many portions, subsidiary histories, portraiture of scenes and men, that glow with imagination, and are lighted up with the finest moral discernment. Perhaps the whole has a latent tone of *accidie*; some of the sketches are too daring in their sarcasm, and the want of story leads to a want of the softer emotions. As the author might have expected, the free treatment of some men and the stinging criticism of others produced an unfavourable impression on many minds. For various reasons, therefore, the admirable work expended on the "History" brought little gain of any kind to Mr. Gilfillan. He was cheered now and then by tidings of good it had done; but he never saw it come to what he believed its proper place, as a companion to "Sartor Resartus." He made an experiment with this work, and forgot certain conditions essential to success. Nevertheless, it remains his own unique memorial.

Many extracts, already given, show the nature of the book; one portion, however, that which treats of his later religious opinions, has not, as yet, been used. A passage from this chapter must be given as an important piece of autobiography.

"In my deepest and darkest hour I clung to the doctrine of the God-Man, the Word incarnate in the



Man of Galilee ; nay, methought His beautiful, bending, compassionate form became larger and brighter from the surrounding gloom ; and I was tempted to cry, ' If there be no other God, Thou, Jesus, at least, art Divine ; and to whom can I go but to Thee, for Thou hast the words of eternal life ! ' And to intensify this affection, there arose to my heart at this time, like a new star bursting on the midnight, the ancient hope of the Church—that ' blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.' I had previously despised this as a dream and wondered, with a great admiration, how a man like Edward Irving ever yielded his giant arms to such gossamer chains. One night, however, in my absence, a humble millenarian missionary called at my dwelling and left, with my dearest relative, some little tracts on the subject. These on my return I read, sooth to say, with no great admiration and with no credence. I began to revolve the subject in my mind, and the result, at last, was a very decided hope in the pre-millennial advent. ' One clear star the seaman saves,' and for a long time I had only this star in my cloud-drifting sky. Unable to answer many of the objections or objurgations of Carlyle and Emerson, I said to myself, '*He* shall, one day, answer them.' Unable to see clearly the relations of reconciliation between science, literature, philosophy, and religion, I cried, *HE* shall, one day, form the bright synthesis between these transcendent things. My faltering Faith began to lean for support upon her younger and fairer sister, Hope.

" One day, while wrapped in deep and silent misery, I was relieved by a friend sitting in the room beside me, murmuring to herself, in soliloquy, ' The Saviour

*is coming soon.*' I felt as if an oracle had opened its lips beside me; and although twelve years have elapsed, and He is not yet here, I am as confident as ever that, as surely 'as Tabor is among the mountains and Carmel by the sea, so He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.' . . . I felt that the present shapes of Christianity were sustained in life partly by galvanic action and effort. There was no prospect of a new cultus arising. . . . But here was a thought, suggested by Christianity itself, of a new and final evolution of its power, which was to explain its mysteries, strengthen its weak points, give it a glorious incarnation on earth in Universal Man, and bring its structure to a golden spire-like point. This commended itself to my imagination as well as reason, 'detained me before the Lord,' shed new life and fire into my flagging ministrations, and was often a secret solace to my own sick and weary heart."

We have here the theory of belief which Mr. Gilfillan was working out in "Christianity and our Era" simultaneously with the progress of his "History of a Man." Now this religious idea seized him, became his life, fanned the fire of literary expression, and drove his pen. The problem of human redemption burdened his spirit, and he bent himself to the solution with a labour that no other work cost him. "Christianity and our Era" is written in grim earnest.

He first surveys the attitude Christianity holds to the chief intellectual agencies at work in the age, and finds opposition, apparently irreconcilable, at almost every point. In reference, moreover, to science, literature, morality, political development, social progress, and philosophy, he says, Christianity "has lost much

of its influence, and, although not a timorous and spurned slave, is not, certainly, a commanding mistress, a queen in the centre of the house." Turning next to the causes of the decline of Christianity, he finds them, first, in the absence from the world of the Author of our faith; secondly, in the superstition which followed Christ's departure, and the prevailing absence of a sound belief in the Second Advent. The Church, he says, is to blame for the Apostasy, and he adds, "it is our firm impression that this hope of Christ's coming, renewed in the Church, must keep the remains of faith and fervour glowing till they be kindled into an ever-burning flame by the arrival of Christ." A review of the present state of the evidences of Christianity, leads to the conclusion that the evidences themselves are very strong; still, it is not only desirable, but likely, in accordance with some of God's former dealings with mankind, that a new element may be introduced, "a new fact evolved, which may have the effect of ending the great controversy, overpowering foes, and deepening to demonstration the faith of those who already believe."

Dealing with substitutes for Christianity, Mr. Gilfillan begins by considering modern Materialism and Pantheism, singling out for special attack a book called "The Divine Drama of History and Civilisation." He then passes to Deism, Positivism, and Theistic Spiritualism, the last represented by Theodore Parker and F. W. Newman. But the force of attack is reserved for "Carlylism," against which point after point is raised. "It rejects Christianity without fully accepting Atheism; it halts awkwardly between two opinions; it gives no satisfaction to the mind of its votary. To Carlyle himself it seems to be

the poisoned shirt of Nessus ; and his groanings under it are becoming less melodious and more terrible every year. To what new species of denial it is tending we cannot say ; but that there are lower deeps before it we are certain. Those of its votaries who will not be repelled and disgusted back from it into the arms of Christianity, will find themselves committed to a course of thought of the most withering and weakening description, and will, perforce, become spiritual savages, *without* barbaric strength and health—naked, homeless wanderers through the wildernesses of nature."

The causes of Scepticism are next fully considered, and the chapter concludes by calling men to study Christianity "in the seats of its true power—in the lives of its humble votaries, in the private history of Christian families, in the Uncle Toms and little Evas who are still left amongst us. Let them be assured of this, that whatever be their feelings to Christianity, Christianity loves them, feels for them, has joys to give them, which nothing else in the universe can ; alone can meet their sense of sin, or appease their awakened conscience ; and looks with a broad, benignant eye upon the human race in general. . . . Scarce one sceptic-leader in the present day is worthy to untie the shoe-latchet of Coleridge in point of genius, or of Hall in point of excellence ; but the merest tyro in the school may enter on the enjoyment of the same mercy, and the same humble hope, by the simple instant act of accepting the religion of Jesus Christ."

Occupying the "Debatable Land between Naturalism and Christianity," the writer finds Popery—"a miracle of fraud,"—Puseyism, Unitarianism, "false



Evangelicalism," and "Mauricism." The spirit of those whom he calls false Evangelicals he contrasts with "the manlier mould, healthier spirit, and larger and more liberal form of religion which distinguished such men as Luther, Knox, Robert Hall and Thomas Chalmers. To these men religion was a glad and a genial thing ; it was a blessed light shining across the universe ; it was a broad amnesty ; it was a heaven-sent summons to smile." Against Maurice's theory of Christianity there is a long and eager argument. It is described as a system of accommodation, a system which would leave us most of our theological names while robbing us of most of our theological things—"would leave the labels but take away the medicines in the rooms of the Great Physician, or substitute for them the pharmacopœia of human philosophy." Finally in this chapter the ideas of Swedenborg are reviewed.

From modern plans for the increase of the power of Christianity the book passes in its ninth chapter to the argument for a supernatural interference on behalf of Christianity ; and with this the volume goes on to its conclusion—the signs of the Second Advent, a picture of its results.

On the whole the impression left is that of thoroughness, of stringent thinking, a full heart, a determination to clear the ground of all that to the author appears hollow in modern systems and theories, so that the one remedy in which faith is placed may be seen and received in its full virtue. Mr. Gilfillan felt the writing of this book to be his great intellectual and spiritual effort, and even those who read without being convinced must own the power of the plea. Yet for persons who neither begin nor end with the

faith of a pre-millennial advent of Christ, the work is a troubling of the waters of thought without the coming of the angel. The criticism tells; yet it inspires the reader with a feeling of sadness rather than exultation while the falsehood of the falsest system is laid bare. It has the air of genius, not of mastery. The sweep is broad; the conclusion seems narrow; though the Christ looked for is a great Christ, a glorious Redeemer. A waste of ruin is made and we stand sorrowful amidst the desolation even when we believe with the author that He is coming who shall make all things new.

In his "History of a Man" Gilfillan had made separation between himself and the literary world—the world at least of the reviews and magazines, of Aytoun, Macaulay, Thackeray and the rest. "Christianity and our Era" made the division deep, and, so far as literary judgment was concerned, complete. He could no longer be known as one desiring to stand on the same ground or earn the same applause as men whose ambition was purely literary. And this he himself clearly perceived, as the journal shows. He chose his position deliberately, after a wide survey of life, and took his stand with the consequences in view. Was he wise in his way of separating himself, in the points insisted on? The answer can scarcely be given in these pages. It is clear, however, that the decision to which he came implied a failure to effect the reconciliation which had been the pole-star of his life. Literature still attracted him; but his reliance on the personal advent meant that no longer for him could thought be the instrument of reconciliation. He changed his venue from the solution of the intellectual-religious life to the solution of providence

—and that, for the time, proved hopelessly beyond him. At the last he virtually acknowledged literature the mere amusement of the race, and civilisation its abortive struggle for a redemption, the sufficient factors of which have not entered as yet into human history. Of this failure in thought he was at least partly aware—with the result that no great attempt was made after 1857 in the field of literature in which he gained his first laurels. His work on the poets came to an end. He went on writing with fulness and power; nay, his later work has often a classic ease, eloquence, and depth unknown to the earlier. His style on the whole improved. He wrote a life of Sir Walter Scott, a life of his friend Anderson, at the very end a life of Burns; the last with a sense of difficulty and pressure due probably to the disease which carried him off. He also composed his poem on "Night." But the *Journal* shows where his thoughts were, shows that he could write no history of British poetry from the heart. It was not "Firmilian," nor any other attack from the same quarter that drove him out of the field. He felt a higher attraction—and yet, yielding to it, following the vision of a great possibility, he seemed always to see "an end of all perfection."

Contrast Carlyle with Gilfillan and it will be found that both were, one time or other, at the same parting of the ways. Carlyle refused the Christian ministry, refused the distinctively religious culture, and went out into the open, where he found as his final and largest task the Voltaire-Frederick drama—a thing far inferior to his powers. Gilfillan clung to religion, and wrought at theological problems which became ever more engrossing and perplexing. If we judge

between life and life, who can deny that Gilfillan's was the nobler choice? It was made under the force of spiritual instincts, and therefore partly unawares. He thought that with his reconciliation unreachd he might still serve literature as well as religion; and his attempts, especially in the labour that went to "Night" were eager and even great. But from the way chosen there was no turning back; he failed for Christ, and did well.

The question may still be asked whether he found—in later days—the harmony of the intellectual and the religious life which appeared so far away when he wrote "Christianity and our Era." It may be further asked whether the discord between the actual and the ideal, between human life and the Divine plan—that is the question of Providence—came to any other solution than the Second Advent of Christ. Did he adhere to that promised relief of the troubled world and the mind perplexed? The only reply now possible is that this was Gilfillan's life-long theme. Almost from the beginning of his career as a thinker he had announced his design to write on "Reconciliation": by 1874 he congratulated himself that his task was in some sort done. It was, however, in the form of a fictitious biography—a form not well suited to him, which had, moreover, the disadvantage that it left the point of philosophic and vital reconciliation unstated so far as his own faith was concerned. Of that book a mere fragment now remains, the two last chapters. There are in these some passages strange, yearning, almost oracular in tone; and one it is right to quote.

"There are moments," says the author, "when the mind seems to pass from tumult and strife into those



‘Regions calm of mild and serene air’

where the eternal are. Such moments are those of reconciliation begun. And when they multiply as life goes on, the more thorough does reconciliation become. The feeling extends not only to all that is pleasurable in our lot and the lot of the world, but to much that is dark, disagreeable and evil, partly indeed because it is to pass away, partly also because it is the will of the great God that it should have been. It includes reconciliation to the thought that possibly some of those evils may never altogether pass away, although against the eternal and increasing and unmitigated continuance of others the reconciled man must rebel. It includes in it a growing humility of spirit which is not the sullen submission of dotage or of death, but points to the reservoir of peace gradually forming in the inmost bosom and communicating with that ocean of perfect rest the man expects to reach hereafter. In Wordsworth’s language, this ‘noisy life’ is becoming ‘a moment in the being of the eternal silence,’ a silent moment. It includes in it a willingness to be, think, or do whatever God manifestly wills him to be, think, or do, but accompanied by a profound conviction that God will never call on him to think or do or be anything but what shall seem, sooner or later and all circumstances considered, to his own conscience, to the God within the breast, right and good. It includes in it submission to fate, not as arbitrary will, but as wisdom, absolute, although hidden in its reasons and purposes. It says, although in a somewhat different sense from Pope, ‘Whatever is, is right,’ and whatever has been, has been right, and whatever shall be, shall be right, if not in itself, yet in the grand scale of the universal

plan. It does not simply look to God with awful respect but with filial affection. If it cannot prove Him to be a Father it can take for granted that He is ; and if it does not see all His ways falling like tributaries into the central lake of His love, it believes that they are all struggling, winding and pursuing their course underground towards it as their true home and resting-place. It believes that many of the fearful phenomena of the present system are fraught with good, are the masks of a merciful and gracious face, shadows in a splendid picture, and that, in Tennyson's language—

“ ‘ Every cloud that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.’

“ Balfour had sometimes stood by agonised death-beds, or beside the couches of lingering disease, or beside Rachels weeping for their children, or beside mourners watching in silence their beloved ones sinking into the grave ; and he had admired the loyalty to God which distinguished those weeping ones. No blasphemy, no murmuring, no sullen desperation, no looks cast up to heaven

. . . “ ‘ With that frantic air  
Which seemed to ask if a God were there,’

but, on the contrary, deep-hearted submission, a resolute determination to believe it was all for the best—a determination which all the sophistry of hell could not have shaken, and with gratitude for the tears God was giving to consecrate and carry away sorrow. He stood and saw this, and he felt their reconciliation stealing into his own heart.

“ He felt, too, that reconciliation implied reconciliation to mystery as one of the necessary elements of

the infinitude, as indeed the very shadow of God. The mystery connected with God may be the inevitable condition of our progress and the means of securing for our spirits a perpetual, ever-retreating horizon ; for our eyes a boundless prospect, with shadows and clouds not resting on but retiring from it as we advance ; for our hearts the promise of an everlasting hope never reaching full fruition, always expecting something new ; and for our energies constant exercise as they are called, sometimes or often, to contend with new difficulties which may be permitted if only to intensify the enjoyment of the prevailing rest. The monk in his cell is miserable, and Stylites stands on his pillar more visibly and conspicuously wretched than other men. So long as we move through varied scenery and varied experiences we move through an atmosphere of joy. To pass

“ ‘ O’er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,’

which Milton describes as the solace of hell, may be not the least exhilarating of the joys of heaven. No lazy lubber-land of perpetual sunshine, no constant resting on velvet lawns to look at drooping roses, and feel warm winds blowing odours from gardens of frankincense ; but often rough rocks to pierce, steep precipices to climb, black forests to thread, gulfs seemingly shoreless and vexed by hurrying blasts to swim, endless vicissitudes of effort and repose, of trial and triumph,—but also endless advance, with the watchwords, ‘ Onward ! Upward ! ’ —this may be the real Elysium of the future. The poet’s ideal may then be fulfilled,—

“ ‘ For when the power of imparting good  
Is equal to the will, the human soul  
Requires no other heaven ’—

or if not thoroughly fulfilled, then increasingly pursued. Saints are to be conceived, not standing fixed in niches, like their images in cathedrals, but following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

The paradox of this passage stands confessed ; and it may be declared that still reconciliation is needed. Yet the paradox appears as the highest point of harmony the adventurous mind could reach. In the practical region, on the other hand, patient, lowly, Christian beneficence is presented as the solution of all the difficulties of our troubled life. In that is blessedness : it brings the consciousness of availing effort, the assured approval of man and of God.

We cannot now make out how Mr. Gilfillan stated the question to which he thus replies. The numerous extracts from "Reconciliation" printed in the "Sketches, Literary and Theological," edited by Frank Henderson, Esq. (Edinburgh : David Douglas, 1881), give almost no indication of the main line of thought, and casual hints are not to be trusted. It is likely, however, that the poem "Night"—a setting in pictorial form of most of the important studies, thoughts, perplexities, and dreams of the later period—supplies better than anything that remains the clue to Mr. Gilfillan's final belief. To this composition he gave more time and care than to anything else of literary nature. Verse was a new exercise to him, and not altogether easy at first ; but he found more facility as he went on. The Journal shows that he regarded his work with increasing confidence as the close came within view ; and if sometimes, in a hopeful mood, feeling his mind as strong as ever while engaged upon the poem, he believed it would give him his place in the literary world, who can blame him ?



Allowing for a slight constraint of form, the poem begins boldly ; and in the course of the first book there is a fine setting of the atomic theory, learned, doubtless, from Samuel Brown :

“ In dance and song began the Universe,  
Though small the dance and tiny was the song  
As that of insects on the evening breeze,  
A fairy dance for microscopic eyes ;  
For microscopic ears a fairy song ;  
Yet graceful as the motion of two sprites  
Wedded, and footing out their measure fine.  
In song and dance began the Universe,  
And from that mazy motion ne’er has swerved,  
And in that song persisteth ever still,  
With richer cadence and more powerful swell  
Audible only to the ear of God,  
Visible only to His searching eye,  
But beautiful and real as God Himself.”

The facts of Astronomy furnish matter for several of the books. Then “ Night ” is regarded in its relation to human life as a joy and a terror. The seventh book on “ The Poets of Night ” is that, perhaps, in which the best work is to be found. The picture of Glencoe and the tale of the massacre, which is put as a prophecy into the mouth of Ossian, are worthy of the subjects. Here, as a poet, Gilfillan found exercise for that love of “ gloomy grandeur ” which Carlyle long before had called his great characteristic.

The last book, “ Night Lost in Day,” is in prophetic strain, and seems to set forth, at the close, the author’s hope for the world. The work of Christ is thus described :—

“ The Prince of Life of old majestic went  
And calm into the room where slumbered death,  
Young death, in likeness of a lovely maid,  
With groans and mournful music sounding near.

He drowns the music, turns the minstrels out,  
And stands serene above the smiling corpse—  
Smiling, as conscious of His presence there.  
And lo ! His look and tread have vanquished death,  
Before His word and touch of power are given :  
First on it He breathes beauty, and then life.  
And so the hope of immortality,  
Brought by His advent to this cold, sad earth,  
Has gilded, though not oped, the gloomy grave ;  
Has softened, though not slain, the tyrant stern ;  
Has hushed the wailings, if not healed the woes,  
And brought forth loveliness, if not yet light.”

The picture of the world’s long waiting for Christ, first figured in the slow progress of the night with its constellations, till the morning star appears, is a fine conception ; it ends in a vision of the purified universal Church to which Christianity has returned.

“ The kingdoms of the world  
Are now the kingdoms of the Lord and Christ,  
And finished is the mystery of God.”

Looking still further forth into the history of the human race, the poet throws his final hope into a “ Dialogue among the Stars.” One sees this Earth in its remoteness and trouble, with Doom lying upon it—a drifting wreck, freighted with the lost.

“ All the old sorrows of the earth are there,  
With one dread element besides—Despair.  
And yet, at times, when shine some glimmering hopes,  
Crossing their weary spirits, they repair  
To the red summits of their mountain tops  
And look across the dark and laden air,  
And wait the rising of some joyful day  
In which their griefs and pains shall pass away.  
—It never dawns . . .”

The lamentation proceeds ; a change takes place ; the second star is at length heard.

“O, brother Star, what sight is this I see?—  
The lost world rolling into distant space,  
Dissolving like a cloud as it doth flee,  
So that no more mine eye can find its place.  
Most strange, if hell at last has past away  
And left behind it universal day.”

In his preface, Mr. Gilfillan distinctly says, that “certain subjects in the poem, such as universal restoration, or rather destructionism, are used entirely for their poetical capabilities.” We are left, therefore, at the close, with something of a peradventure; still, with Faith and Hope fixed in glorious power over the decay of symbols, the strife of existence, and the terrors of sin and death.

Leaving this, however, we may turn to another line of thought—a more personal one—which carries the solution of the great question somewhat farther. In a letter to Mr. J. Stanyan Bigg, of 30th June, 1857, Mr. Gilfillan says that he admits, in part, the charge of *souredness*, but regards the feeling, so far as he has it, as an augury that he has some truth in him yet unuttered. “I feel in myself the buddings of a great truth, not absolutely new, else it were absolutely false, but, I think, including all being in its sweep and forming a unity, as the Bible and all good men and books do, out of ‘ruin reconciled.’” Proceeding to speak of his circumstances and trials, he says, “I have, you may be sure, something to cheer me under that systematic abuse and slander from which no one, since Hazlitt and Shelley, has suffered more. I have a good congregation, the ear of the town, an admirable wife, a decent, though not a rich, competence, a determined spirit, a firm belief in Christ as the ‘Coming One,’ and a most thorough and growing disgust

at a world which I do not scruple to call 'the Devil's,' although, praise be to God! I do not add his and his alone."

The note of pessimism here, we have found also in "Christianity and Our Era." But it was by no means dominant. The activities of his calling saved him, and more than saved him, from misanthropy; and his mood became less gloomy as life advanced. Never, in any sense, buoyant, defeated in his attempts to utter the idea that dimly rose before the mind, he enjoyed a growing sense of power within the limits to which work and habit more or less confined him. The Journal shows that his outlook, after the publication of the book just named, did not contract, but rather took a wider sweep. The result was, on one side, more impatience of the bonds in which religious opinion was held, with a change in his own views on subjects like Inspiration and Revelation; and, on the other side, by-and-by, greater faith in what brave human souls might achieve under the Divine guidance. Writing again to Mr. Stanyan Bigg, in July, 1862, he says:—

"I have now both your notes. The first contains some valuable glimpses and hints of thought. I am not sure if you leave a sufficiently broad margin for Reason, and if you do not appear to forget what it is—a Revelation from God, of an imperfect but real and fundamental character. It is, as really as Scripture, from the inspiration of God, and Scripture must be, to some extent, tried by its verdict. Reason, in looking to Scripture, must expect something new, but nothing absurd; something above its sphere, but nothing contradictory to it; and must have very strong evidences of its coming from God in a special sense at all.



“For Reason to deny the possibility of another Revelation were a suicidal assertion, since it is a revelation itself—and were an assertion as ridiculous as if instinct in the bee were to deny the possibility of reason in the man. But Reason, nevertheless, within its own sphere, has its stern rights and makes its unalterable demands. It must, first of all, reject all absurdities and contradictions, as what no amount of evidence can prove. Were the doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, what the Unitarians call it—the belief that a Being can be three and one in the same sense—then Reason must reject it as certainly as the assertion that two and two make five. But we know that is not the true version of Trinitarianism. And suppose Reason does discover contradictions in a professed revelation, it must next look to their connection with it, how far they are essential and how far accidental. If essential, it must reject the revelation; if only accidental, it may receive *cum grano*. Next, Reason must inquire how much of new there is in the Revelation, how much may have come from human sources, and how much bears the immediate stamp of God; and to the last alone will it apply the term *Revelation* in strictness, while it may gladly admit that the connection of the old with the new gives it an additional sanction.

“Next, Reason must, although with great caution, compare the Revelation with previous well-weighed conclusions as to the character of God, and as to the special call for it in the circumstances of mankind. And, in fine, Reason must severely but candidly examine the evidences of a new Revelation, the bias of the witnesses, their educational advantages or the reverse, their temperament, the means and

rate of progression in the new faith, its effects on morals, the permanence of its power, the agreement of its external and internal proofs, the net result of the difficulties and objections as balanced by the cumulative probabilities of genuineness; and which theory of the case solves most of the difficulties or has fewest to solve. In all this she does not step out of her province; and in all this, I believe that Christianity, truly seen, can answer all the requirements of Reason."

The advance from the position of "Christianity and our Era," will at once appear; and if we turn to an article on F. W. Robertson of Brighton, printed in Mr. Gilfillan's "Remoter Stars in the Church Sky," 1867, we find, along with a broadening outlook, a growing hope for the potency of Christian faith and truth as forces in the human mind. Robertson, he says, "looked upon Christianity, not as a narrow collection of bristling points, but as an expansive, all-sided, and progressive system—if a system indeed it can be called, and not rather a Divine element of spiritual insight and of spiritual life, ready to coalesce with all things that are true and lovely and of good report, wherever it meets them on its immortal journey. And of the relations of science and philosophy to religion, Robertson appears to have had views as just as they were liberal. He thought they were powers—or orbs, shall we call them?—which, when kept within their own spheres, were amicable and bound by beautiful harmonies."

It appears that despite all his vaticinations of disaster, Gilfillan found in Robertson one whose appearance and wide acceptance as a teacher were full of hope for the Church, a hope at which he for

his part was not slow to grasp. His suggestion of it here may be taken in close connection with the letter to Mr. Bigg. Another possibility—one inwrought with providence—shed light upon the troubles of the race.

Among correspondents of the period there were some who must have very considerably affected Mr. Gilfillan's mind ; and it will not be out of place to give here two extracts showing the kind of men with whom he exchanged thought. One is from the letter of a gentleman, frequently mentioned in the journal, whose strong originality often ran in unexpected directions, matching Gilfillan in vigour of expression, and surpassing him, perhaps, in strenuous criticism of life. Referring apparently to the "Essays and Reviews" the writer says:—

"Do not think that any heterodoxy with a reason to back it can shock me. I am heterodox in every thing. But I must tell you the 'Essays' do not appear to me fair statements of perplexity, but, on the contrary, a dogmatism on the part of sceptics which is truly absurd—Pyrrhonism growing insolent and assuming the magisterial air of 'It is,' 'It is not,' which is ridiculous in a professed doubter. How infinitely humbler is Montaigne's motto, '*Que sais je ?*' how infinitely more consistent !

"You say we should never be 'bigots.' I care nothing what I am called. If I arrive at an opinion which is called bigotry, patience, I must bear it till I see reason to alter my verdict. I will not be warned off my own property by some other man's mad bull ; but just pop a round lead into his cranium. I find in the Bible a good deal about everlasting torment ; and the meaning of the Greek, after all the

Maurician glozing, remains *for ever and ever*, where the worm dieth not ; and if there is a place of this nature it is intended to receive somebody. I don't presume to specify whom ; but no maudlin humanity, no impotence of reason to justify to fools like myself God's eternal benevolence, shall deter me from asserting that somebody is destined for Hell, and that, therefore, all will not be saved.

"Original sin is blotted out by Christ's coming, and other sins too, *when repented of* ; but when unrepented of—God only knows (I know nothing), but He seems to say, 'Hell is for them.' Now, till He seems not to say it, I must e'en accept His word, bitter and irreconcilable though it may seem to my contemptible faculty. I cannot take Christ as a sweet unction and reject His word, by which alone I know of Him. Certainly, without finessing, no man can doubt of awful punishment to the wicked. It is the part of a fool to mitigate its horrors—when, with all its terrors, it scarcely deters men from sin—simply to take an objection out of the mouths of scoffers when they say that we worship Moloch as our God Jehovah."

Such was one vigorous representation. From another correspondent of greater philosophical power came the following :—

"Let me thank you for sending me the *Dundee Advertiser*, containing your hearty article on Robertson of Brighton. I find I am too ignorant of that noble fellow, and must take the earliest opportunity I can of obtaining a more satisfactory knowledge of him. The course you indicate him to have entered on is quite that which strikes me as the right one in these days. The *negative* of 'enlightenment' has



alone obtained since the time of Voltaire and before it. Men have only said 'No' since then; 'this is unreasonable,' and 'that is unreasonable.' But this *no* has been but a multitude of *individual noes*; there has been no result but a Babel of individuals, each for himself. It is this anarchy that is the hopeless thing; for there is no consensus in it, no universal. The true thing to do now seems to be the *affirmative*. The sun is old and undoubtedly spotted. It is only maddening, however, for each of us to go on pointing out *that* only, in his own way denouncing and lamenting. If there is the negative of old age and spots, there is also the affirmative of some heat and some light yet—indeed the only heat, the only light we can now get—let us then unite in the affirmative of that. So we shall be together again—together in tacit admission as well of the age and the spots, but all almost removing these by the light of the affirmative we throw back on them. That is the sort of spirit of what I think the right way of it, and it seems to have been pretty much Robertson's idea too."

Closing this chapter another extract may be allowed, from one of many letters addressed to Mr. Gilfillan by the father of F. W. Robertson. Dating from Cheltenham, 29th December, 1869, Captain Robertson speaks of having sent to a gentleman a set of papers containing memorials of his son, and proceeds:—

"In his very touching letter of thanks he said that among the papers he had collected relating to my son were a few sheets he had torn out of a small book he had purchased at a book-stall in London. They were headed 'Last not least—the late Rev.

Frederick W. Robertson of Brighton.' I then wrote to this gentleman to ascertain the title of the book from whence the leaves had been extracted, as well as the name of the publisher. On this he could give me no information, as he took no heed of these points, having left the rest of the book at the stall. Fortunately the names of the printers, Butler and Tanner, were at the last page ; so, as a *dernier resort*, I wrote to them. To my delight I received a reply from one of them dated 'Frome' not only saying the writer highly revered F. W. R., but telling me the title of the book—'Remoter Stars in the Church Sky'—the author the Rev. George Gilfillan.

"Little did I think when I read 'Last not least,'—which brought tears into my eyes, that you my friend, yes, my friend I may indeed say, were the writer. I have written to the publishers for two copies of the book."

Captain Robertson closes with these words—"Now, let me say, may you and yours be participators in the blessings of the event which at this time of the year we commemorate ! A cold day is not conducive to improve the handwriting of one in his eighty-second year."

## CHAPTER VII.

### PUBLIC LIFE, 1862-78.

OF the many public appearances of Mr. Gilfillan in Dundee, during the period now to be considered, one may have special record. On the 16th September, 1862, a meeting was held to express sympathy with Garibaldi, and protest against the continued occupation of Rome by the French army. The object of the gathering and the warm greeting of the large audience roused Mr. Gilfillan's enthusiasm. In the course of his address, moving one of the resolutions, he said :—"I am rather happy that the motion put into my hands does not commit me to speak directly upon the subject of Garibaldi himself, I have said my say upon him already, and, besides, I really can hardly trust myself in speaking on a theme on which a Dundee journalist has recently called me an enthusiast. Frankly, sir, I plead guilty to the charge, and I glory in the name. I am an enthusiast in the cause of Garibaldi, and in the cause of Italian liberty, and in the cause of Italian unity, and in some other causes besides, and I should despise myself if I were not. Nor do I envy those who can talk of the wounded hero without one word of genial appreciation, of generous sympathy, of kindly compassion, and who often seem willing to wound and

yet afraid to strike him. . . . The big tear starts to the eye of the Italian when he thinks of Rome, and it is partly the tear of pride, as he remembers what Rome once was, and partly of sorrow, as he remembers what Rome is now. Through that tear he beholds the city of the Cæsars, the excellency of beauty and the excellency of power, with its mighty masses of buildings, its five millions of inhabitants, its immemorial temples, its forum the temple of a greater god than Jove, its broad ways leading to every quarter of the globe, its humming streets, its yellow Tiber, its stern Tarpeian rock, like the image of Justice or the sword of Damocles hanging over the proud city, its porticos, its gardens, its baths, its bridges, its seven hills, its Capitol, and its Coliseum—these, and the great fact underlying all these, that it was liberty that laid the foundation and reared the superstructure of the whole—this is the prospect through one lens. And what through the other? It is that of a standing and magnificent ruin, with a few priests and painters creeping through the silent streets and under the vast old buildings and works of art, as if afraid of the sound of their own footsteps, or of the shadows of genius and power still hovering there—with a declining population, a putrid faith, a bad government, a climate poisoned from the marshes in the neighbourhood, an old man as false as he is feeble, who once promised to be the morning star of Italian freedom, but is now the mere dreg and dropt jelly of his former *prestige*—the Pope, namely—presiding over it—with a guard of French soldiers, those pious, moral, Christian men, defending the last fortress of the antiquated superstition—and with another man of sin in the distance, hating popery at bottom as he



does hell pains, believing and loving nothing in this universe but himself, and yet from policy and self-love maintaining in spite of promises, remonstrances, and stings of his own conscience (if conscience he has), the empire of the Pope, and, shall I add, of the Devil in Rome. Behold the contrast between Rome in the present and Rome in the past; and can you wonder though the Italian patriot should weep tears of pride and sorrow, yea, of blood and fire as he compares the two?

“‘Italy should be, and shall be one; and it should be and shall be one by having one head, and that head its natural head—Rome.’ This was the idea and programme of Garibaldi. . . . And why should it be thought a thing incredible that Italy should be free, and that Italy should be one? . . . I express my unbounded confidence in the success of the great cause of Italian freedom. I augur this from nothing more than from the enthusiasm for Garibaldi which is pervading the land, and which is speaking out in such meetings as this to-night. . . . Should they shed his blood, it will cry, like the blood of Abel, from the dust; it will take one of the loftiest parts in the awful chorus of the souls under the altar, crying to the ear of the Eternal, night and day, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’ Should they imprison him for a lengthened period, his dungeon shall become a hallowed and consecrated spot, and shall shine with a light bedimmed by all the splendours of Versailles and all the time-honoured glories of the Vatican. . . . But, whatever becomes of him, the cause of Italian freedom is secure; secure in the purpose of God; secure in the determination of

man; secure through the very persecutions and bloodshed by which it has been tried, and proved, and watered."

These fragments of a notable oration show in what way Gilfillan took hold of his subject, his foresight, too, and the energy of his address. Often, as those who stood beside him on platforms testify, his voice rang out, thus clear and strong, for liberty, humanity, and truth.

On the occasion of the Shakespeare Celebration in 1864, of the Scott Centenary in August, 1871, and frequently at Burns' anniversary meetings, Gilfillan was the chief orator in Dundee and elsewhere, his literary enthusiasm taking no shame to be associated with that of the multitude, ruder and less discriminating than his own. By many his frequent appearance on platforms for such purposes was considered derogatory to his position not only as a Christian minister, but as a literary man. He did not see it so. The Scottish, humane soul of him, trustful in the good, that it would overcome the evil, trustful in the liberating power of thought, found ample room in the Christian cultured life for sympathies and ardours like these.

In 1864, Gilfillan records in a letter to Aird the continuance of his labour as a critic. "I spent a night lately," he says (7th May), in "burning or returning some hundred MSS. and books which had accumulated in my hands." The burning was a drastic remedy, not unnecessary on occasions. Some manuscripts which had not been disposed of at the time of his death remain still, for which no other fate could possibly be decreed. Yet it was only in peculiar circumstances, as when posthumous manuscripts were sent by foolish

admirers, he used the trial of fire. On the same day that he disposed of the hundred there was sent him, he says, "a mammoth MS. that might have contained the memoirs of Melchizedek, of some 1500 folio pages."

A projected trip to Switzerland had to be exchanged in 1864 for a visit to the Highlands; and in October he had a lecturing tour which led him through the north-east of Ireland to Dungannon, Derry, Belfast, and Dublin. He could now say that from lecturing and preaching tours he returned refreshed, and that his houses were almost always bumpers. One year, 1865, he is at Moffat taking the place of the Dean of Carlisle, who has been unable to close a course, then at Newcastle, Sunderland, Haddington, Glasgow, Brechin. Another year, 1873, he is at Whitby in April, Inverness in May, Longtown and Newcastle in September, Sunderland in October, Hamilton in November; and these are only the longer of the journeys he undertook.

Meanwhile his own congregation was flourishing. On the 10th May, 1865, he wrote to his friend, the Rev. John Muir, Newtyle:—"Great night in School Wynd on Sabbath. I did manage to get in by the back door, and there was a great fluctuating sea of faces and forms. I kept calm, however, and read my lecture with firmness and effect. The *Scotsman* has given the most of it, I see." From time to time the members of his church signified their attachment to him by increasing his stipend, though it never rose above £350 per annum.

For tea-meeting or "soiree" addresses Mr. Gilfillan was much in request in Dundee and throughout Scotland. And it was not for ordinary reasons. He

gave to each gathering of the kind an oration which, even when brief, stimulated thought, revived old memories, carried hope into a great future, bore a burden of severe condemnation of public iniquity, or rose high in eulogy of some hero of the day.

A fellow-minister of a younger generation, who knew Gilfillan well, speaks of the singular skill he had in making the great literary names of the earlier century potent with the multitude. A church "soiree" is not the most keenly intellectual assembly in the world, yet on such an occasion Gilfillan would appear before the miscellaneous audience, and instead of giving the usual anecdotes or reduced sermon, he would start off with a reference to Shelley, a quotation from Coleridge, a *résumé* of any magazine article he was writing. And remote as the topic might be, he never failed to secure attention. Coleridge, Foster, Shelley, and De Quincey were introduced with a grand persuasion that nothing which concerned them could be indifferent to a thinking being. Such confidence brings its reward, and no one has exercised it so largely as Gilfillan. By his own proper genius he did what Hazlitt, with far more *technique*, far greater stores of material, never thought of doing. Many in Dundee and elsewhere found new interest in life stirred within them by those orations to the people.

Somewhat different from the ordinary "soiree" was that which celebrated the induction of some young minister, or the jubilee of a veteran of the pulpit. At these meetings the past that stood out clear in Mr. Gilfillan's recollection generally formed the substance of the speech. At Crieff, for instance, on the settlement in the United Presbyterian Church there, in 1870, of the Rev. J. C. Inglis, Mr. Gilfillan recalled



the ministers of Strathearn whom he had known. In the course of his address he said: "One of William Hazlitt's most suggestive essays is entitled 'Reasons for Preferring the Past to the Future.' There are minds, I believe, which always, and there are moods in which all minds do this. The future is always dark—at least always uncertain—but the past is a fixed object of retrospect, and is for ever beautiful in that

" 'Light which never was on sea or land,'

the divine light of distance. My earliest recollections of Crieff are all pleasurable. As I never had any tasks to learn there, my feelings when I visited it as a boy were all of a holiday complexion. My grandfather—the Rev. James Barlas—died before I was born, but I, of course, heard a great deal about him. He was licensed to preach when only nineteen, and I have heard that once when he was mounting the pulpit, an old woman, sitting in the lattern" [Anglicé, lectern], "amazed at his juvenile appearance, called out: 'Laddie, whaur are ye gaen?'" Mr. Gilfillan went on to speak of his grandmother, whose "serene and smiling countenance" he could remember, and of the preaching on sacramental occasions at Crieff—one "tent-preaching" especially which he fully described. Then the thought of Comrie carried memory up the strath. "I remember at similar scenes in Comrie such men as Dr. Pringle of Perth, with his tall, majestic presence, his stature unbent under the burden of more than seventy years, and his homely but striking sentiment—his son-in-law the gifted Jameson of Methven, with his beautiful vein of blended piety and genius, his odd but original delivery, his plain but pleasing features sometimes

lighted up with a strange loveliness not of the earth, as if a stray gleam from other worlds had fallen upon them, his apostolic meekness, and his burning fire of genius—honest Mr. Aird of Rattray, with his profound and oftentimes highly-finished discourses most awkwardly rendered in his address, and so obscure at times that some one proposed as a motto on a book of his the words of the psalm, ‘Darkness he sent, and made it dark.’ My own venerable father, who never seemed more in his element than when preaching under the blue canopy of a Scottish summer heaven, and to whom children as well as bearded men listened with the intensest interest. Andrew Scott, with his clear, sharp intellect and logical power. Balfour of Lethendy, with his strong and stalwart form, his grand rolling voice, and his clear, robust, and masculine sense. Young of Logiealmond, with his natural eloquence, imposing appearance, and fine, mellow, flute-like tones of voice. Clark, late of Dalreoch, a man with no little Irish fire and fancy, some of whose solemn and striking sentences, heard amidst the closing shadows of a sacramental eve, are still ringing in my ears; and, not to mention men still living, such as Mr. Ramsay and Dr. Marshall, the mild and amiable James Mitchell of Comrie, whom nothing but a weak system, nervous temperament, and early death prevented from taking as high a place as a sermon writer as my friend John Ker of Glasgow has done, the two resembling each other considerably in refined sentiment and classical diction. Dr. Young of Perth was another of these worthies, but I never had the good fortune to hear him either at Crieff or Comrie, though I heard him elsewhere with great admiration. I never hear such good preaching now-

a-days—first, no doubt, because I, like so many ministers, seldom hear preaching at all ; I am so often at it myself ; and secondly, because in early youth there is a charm in hearing sermons, as well as in reading books, which fades away and never fully returns. . . . Well, those days are gone, those luminaries set. The times are changed, and we are changed with them. And far indeed am I from wishing to crush the present race under the feet of the men of the past. Although the essential truths remain the same, yet in many minor matters the tastes and feelings and culture of the young race are to be consulted. And this, I am certain, would be the feeling of those admirable men I have been describing—some of whom were as noted for their liberality as for their abilities—were they alive now, and could they unite the experience of the past with the richer, wider lights which the present is pouring on all who have eyes to see, understanding to comprehend, and hearts to feel the signs of our times, the characteristics and the tendencies of our ‘wondrous mother age.’ ”

A former co-presbyter, Dr. Baxter, now of Kirkcaldy, speaking of those “soiree” addresses, says that Gilfillan could be humorous, but the funny was not his forte, and he commonly shunned it. Regarding one public appearance, the same correspondent adds, “Mr. Gilfillan can hardly have meant mirth, when, at a meeting called for the purpose of planting drinking-troughs for horses all over the town, he treated the audience to a laudatory review of his friend, Dr. Samuel Brown’s poem on Galileo. The address did sound queer. Only it was from him, and that seemed enough to those who were satisfied to have his countenance.”

Dr. Baxter tells how, when a company was in the parlour and brisk conversation was going on, "Mr. Gilfillan would beg liberty to sit aside for half-an-hour in their presence, that some paragraphs might be added to a paper which had to be finished immediately. He would then dash off the fragment and, inclosing it for postage, join us again as if no interruption had broken the vein of his thoughts." He speaks also of the Friday evening re-unions in the manse, which came as prized opportunities of mental quickening to a number of young men in Dundee. Literary, political, and theological discussion was the fare, and Mr. Gilfillan often monologised on some favourite topic.

In 1866 Mr. Gilfillan undertook some work for the *Pulpit Analyst*, then conducted by Dr. Joseph Parker. Two notable papers were contributed, one on F. W. Robertson, the other on "Ecce Homo." The following year he wrote for the same periodical a series of sketches which were gathered into the volume, "Remoter Stars in the Church Sky." They recur to some old subjects, such as his father, and Jameson of Methven, but are for the rest on new themes, including the Rev. John Morell Mackenzie, the Rev. James Everett, and the Rev. Alexander Stewart of Cromarty. Less exuberant than his early sketches, written, as he himself acknowledges, with some constraint, they are good specimens of biography, all the better perhaps for their chastened style. The poem "Night" had appeared in 1867. An offer of fifty guineas for the copyright, made by a gentleman in Dundee was refused. "If the book failed, it was too much," Mr. Gilfillan said, "and if it succeeded, too little." The reception it met was on the whole pleasing, although



the old hostility made itself felt. He was in the way of saying that he had as much for it as Milton had for his "Paradise Lost." To complete the enumeration of his works, it may be added that "Modern Christian Heroes" appeared in 1869, the "Life of Sir Walter Scott" in the close of 1870, the "Life of Dr. William Anderson" in 1873, and the "Life of Burns" in the National Edition of his works, the issue of which began in 1876.

Among Mr. Gilfillan's correspondents of this period was the Rev. George Jacque, Auchterarder, whose poem, "The Clouds," he had read and praised at the time of its publication. Writing to Mr. Jacque, after having read part of his "Ruins of Hope," Mr. Gilfillan said:—"I snatch at length a moment to write you anent the 'Ruins of Hope.' It has, I think, the materials of a good popular poem, although the type of it is rather of an antiquated cast, just as my 'Night' also was. The miscellaneous poem is not now much in request. Unfinished as it is, no complete criticism can be expected. It contains a great many excellent passages and single pointed and striking lines. Your incidental pictures of scenery, and especially of sky scenery, are always good. . . . Above all, I like your lyrics, in which kind of poetry you greatly excel."

On the 12th April, 1870, he wrote again to the same correspondent:—"I herewith return 'Ruins,' and wish you all success in their redaction. They have much genuine stuff in them. I had the pleasure of lecturing last week in Queen Street Hall, immediately under the room where the Edinburgh Presbytery poured for some five hours, I suppose, their vials on my devoted head. I stood under the shadow of them for

an hour and ten minutes, and felt no bad effects. I am now disposed to turn from the clergy, and seek my sympathisers more among the intelligent laity, who, if they do not pour vials and dream dreams, discern better the signs of their time. . . . I have had the busiest winter I remember ; have preached three times almost every Sabbath from November, and am just beginning to breathe freely. But you are right, monotony and idleness would soon put me in pandemonium." . . .

The reference in this letter to the Presbytery of Edinburgh requires explanation. At a meeting of that Court, held on 4th January, 1870, notice was given of a motion which proposed to take Mr. Gilfillan to task for some statements he had made in a lecture, calling in question the correctness of the Church standards. At the close of his forenoon service, on the following Sabbath, Mr. Gilfillan entered pretty fully into the matter, in the way of explanation and defence. Letters, meanwhile, passed between him and several members of the Edinburgh Presbytery who desired to bring the matter to an issue without delay. Mr. Gilfillan, however, resented the interference of another presbytery than that to which he was directly responsible, and refused to come to terms. On 1st February, after a long discussion, it was decided in Edinburgh to remit to the Dundee Presbytery the statements complained of, and, towards the close of the month, the matter was considered in this Court. In the course of the discussion Mr. Gilfillan read a paper, in which he disclaimed having any deep quarrel with the standards of the Church, and expressed regret for his occasional use of language which had been thought unguarded. A

resolution accepting the statement as satisfactory, and declaring further procedure unnecessary, was unanimously adopted by the Presbytery.

Writing publicly in reference to this matter, in October of the same year, Gilfillan gave his own account of what was called his recantation. "The three points on which I stated myself opposed to the Confession were—1st, The creation of the world in six days ; 2nd, eternal reprobation ; 3rd, the damnation of infants. . . . Towards the close of the secession of Presbytery, the question was asked whether I had no more objections to the Confession of Faith than those I had stated. I said at once, No ; meaning by this, as any sensible man would see at once, that these were the only three to which I publicly objected, and had singled out, accordingly, for special opposition. If any thought that my reply to their question implied any more, I have simply to say they were mistaken." The whole matter was revived, in 1877, by remarks Mr. Gilfillan made in regard to a case then before the Church. Writing on this occasion he said : "My position now is that of one waiting, and I wait, along with a good many others, to see the result of the revision of the Confession ; and this, I have reason to hope, will be so far satisfactory to the liberal party. I might have preferred the removal of our standards altogether, and the substitution of a short summary of general principles ; but, failing this, an honest and searching revision is a great boon ; and that, whatever might be the intention of some who yielded to the proposal for the Committee, is now likely to be given us. If I be prosecuted it must be for having strongly advocated what has now been conceded, the fact that

our Confession is not infallible and requires to be revised."

The only point deserving special notice is the objection Mr. Gilfillan took to "eternal reprobation." He meant to refuse belief in what appeared to be the teaching of the Confession that, from eternity and to eternity, some were arbitrarily decreed to reprobation. Speaking in December, 1877, he said, "He believed that God was bringing on the Church strong means of humiliation, teaching her that she must come down from some of those proud, dogmatic claims which she had so long held, which she had derived from Popery, and which she was disposed to hold with firm grasp still. God was telling her that she must come down from those claims; she must abandon her false position upon those giddy heights; she must humble herself by reducing her articles of faith, and by laying more stress on the spirit of the Gospel than upon mere dogmas. God was saying to Christianity what Christ said to His disciples of old, 'Except thou become a little child, go down into thy cradle again, thou shalt not enter into the kingdom of heaven'—in other words, thou shalt in no wise, and by no manner of means, gain that glorious and everlasting triumph which is otherwise before thee."

Turning to other matters, we find him, in the course of a letter to Thomas Aird, of 26th November, 1870, writing as follows:—"I went, in the close of the autumn, almost straight from Hawick to John o' Groats. I dined at Thurso Castle with Sir Tolle-mache Sinclair, and was glad to see a portrait of old Sir George in the dining-room. He used to write me now and then. I liked a man who could love Carlyle, Dr. Croly, and even G. G. Did you notice a book



called 'Peasant Life in the North of Scotland' praised in *Blackwood*? I had got a copy 'from the author' anonymously when it appeared, and find him to be the Procurator-Fiscal of Wick, Malcolm M'Lennan, a man of fine intelligence and keen eye for Scottish lower life, almost a Galt, and with vivid literary taste."

From a visit to the Continent, in the early summer of 1872, when he travelled through Switzerland, and spent some time in Paris, Mr. Gilfillan returned by way of Boulogne to London. Thence, after visiting a brother-in-law in Buckinghamshire, and seeing Cambridge, he went north to Newcastle, and had some days with his friend, Mr. Frank Carr. This gentleman was his companion in one of his visits to the Lake country, when they had what Mr. Carr calls "a jocund and heroic time." In his work, "Hesperides," published under the pseudonym of Lancelot-Cross (Trübner, 1883), there is a sketch of Gilfillan as "Chrysostom," a memorial of the friendship, warm and discriminative. He says, "What nights we had in Egypt! I glance back at the earliest. Burke had our admiration; Robertson of Brighton, tears and praises; Arnold had grateful thoughts; Hugh Miller, sorrowful sympathy; *Tom Jones* found a welcome; *Aurora Leigh* was saluted. . . . Often had we such Attic feasts—'when one fine thought called forth another; those rare seasons when the soul expands with full freedom, and man feels himself brought near to man'—all seasoned with heart-felt glee; and frequently with strong humour too. I may say of him, as Walpole said of Gray, however little was displayed in his writings, 'humour was his native and original turn.' . . . He was for the world, but

for Scotland first. To his time he presented the religious poetic mind, the large-hearted disciple of literature; one of those whose active Christianity appears to most persons to be the fervour of heresiarchs. As to myself, he was a direct influence, not lightly felt, in all that pertains to sympathy with the labours and trials of genius; in regions of religious and poetic thought; in times of close intercourse with Nature."

In a letter of 12th May, 1873, addressed to Mr. Aird, the following occurs:—"I am glad you like my life of Anderson. Logan is pouring in letters of a similar kind, all very gratifying, especially those from Anderson's personal friends who seem all pleased. I had a good deal of time with Carruthers [Dr. Carruthers of Inverness], a long walk with him on Saturday, and to-day he came with me as far as Kingussie. He is in fine feather, editing a new edition of Chambers's Encyclopædia, and otherwise busy—very well for an old man of seventy-four." To Mr. Aird also he wrote in August, 1874, "Have you noticed that poor Dobell is dead. I saw it almost accidentally in a newspaper paragraph to-day. His death has reopened many sluices of memory to me and affected me much. Nichol, S. Brown, A. Smith, Bigg, and Yendys, have all been cut down at, or ere, or scarcely past the prime of life. There are other aspirants now, but none like these." Again, on 22nd December, 1875, Gilfillan writes to Aird—"I drop a hasty note to say that Mr. Anderson ('Surfaceman') will likely call on you about the New Year. You will be greatly interested in his simple manners and appearance—an unspoiled Burns in these respects—and with not a little of the real *mens*

*divinior*. Of course, you know his poetry and his remarkable history. . . . I saw your name at Carlyle's testimonial. I was not asked, else I would have put down my name cheerfully. He, in many respects, deserves it all, and, I suspect, poor old man, needs it all now." The letter from which this extract is taken was among the last Gilfillan sent to his friend Aird.

To the Rev. Dr. Blair, Dunblane, whose friendship Gilfillan greatly valued, he wrote in June, 1874, with reference to a memoir of his brother, Dr. James Gilfillan of Stirling who had just passed away. Summing up the brief notes of his brother's life for Dr. Blair's use, Mr. Gilfillan said :—"You know all about his principal work on the Sabbath. I don't know if you are aware that he learned Dutch in order to obtain some information about the Sabbath and its literature. I may mention that, though James's manner seemed a little cold and his own style measured, if not a little tame, I never knew a man more enthusiastic in his appreciation of what he thought genius in others such as Chalmers, Professor Young, Jameson of Methven, and Dr. Ferrier of Paisley. His literary tastes were keen as well as refined. He was very much an æsthetic man, fond of music, a good singer, and passionately fond of scenery. His discharge of every variety of duty was, as you know, exemplary and punctual." On the publication of the memoir, Mr. Gilfillan wrote to Dr. Blair (4th September, 1874), "I have warmly to thank you, in my own name and that of all our family, for your very kind and generous, as well as very pleasing and picturesque memoir of my brother. It is highly gratifying to all of us, and must be so also to his widow and his many friends in his old congregation and elsewhere."

Among friends of the later period were the Rev. David Beatt, Aberdeen, and the Rev. J. C. Inglis, Crieff, both, while students, members of his congregation. The Rev. Robert Muir, once of Hawick, the Rev. Peter Rutherford, Glasgow, the Rev. D. R. Williamson, Kirkmaiden, and the Rev. A. Crichton Alexander, London, besides those in his own presbytery and others already named, were specially intimate with Mr. Gilfillan. Mr. Rutherford contributed to the *Homilist* a notice of his life, and Dr. Blair to the *United Presbyterian Magazine*.

Early associated with public movements in Dundee, and rewarded from time to time not only with thanks, but with substantial tokens of gratitude, Mr. Gilfillan laid the city under great obligation by his efforts on behalf of the Free Library, which is now a flourishing and important means of literary culture. On the 22nd March, 1866, he delivered in Bell Street Church, an earnest appeal in favour of the proposal to establish it. He was also a member of the first Free Library Committee, and gave much help in selecting the books that were procured at the opening of the institution. The chief recognition of this and all his other services to the city took the form of a public testimonial which was presented to him on the 5th October, 1876. With a very tasteful cabinet bearing an inscription, Provost Robertson, in name of the subscribers, made over to Mr. Gilfillan a cheque for £1000, the understanding having been come to, at Mr. and Mrs. Gilfillan's own desire, that after their death the interest of the money should be devoted to educational scholarships. In the course of his address of thanks, Mr. Gilfillan made special reference to the energy of the provost and of John Henderson, Esq., John Leng, Esq., and W. D.



Latto, Esq., as members of the committee. He also said :—" The public causes to which I claim being of some service in this town and elsewhere are the voluntary cause, in the beginning of my career ; the anti-slavery cause afterwards ; the cause of the diffusion of general knowledge, specially as connected with the Watt Institution and other societies here ; and, latterly, and in my judgment best of all, the course of liberal and progressive thought. These are the leading landmarks in my career. I mention them in no spirit of egotism or self-glorification. I am as aware of my faults and failures as is my bitterest enemy, and am ready to acknowledge them. I have spoken this not in self-defence ; for I am not here on my trial. I am here, on the contrary, in the centre of those who have proved themselves my friends, and who are so in spite of their full knowledge of my imperfections, and are disposed to take me as I am. I claim only this, not as a favour, but as a right, that you credit me in every step I have taken with common—I will not say uncommon—honesty. I said many years ago in my pulpit—"I want no epitaph on my grave but this—Here lies an honest man.'"

The testimonial was subscribed to by many thousands in all parts of the world, and gratified him chiefly by associating with his name a trust for the aid of deserving scholars, the sons and daughters of poor parents in Scotland. It may be added here that since Mr. Gilfillan's death a large building for worship and other uses bearing the name of the "Gilfillan Memorial" has been erected by the congregation under the ministry of the Rev. David Macrae, many of the members of which were connected with the School Wynd Church during Mr. Gilfillan's life.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CLOSE—CHARACTERISTICS.

THE stories about Mr. Gilfillan are a large collection and are, on the whole, not legendary in substance though some of them have gathered a little foliage. He had personal peculiarities which led naturally to anecdotes. His indifference to social usage, his naïve confidence in every one who seemed a friend, his loud, boyish denunciation of a public opponent or a disliked scheme, the odd abruptness of his manner at one time and the royal superiority of it at another, his habit of free largesse to all applicants and as free satire on whatsoever excited his contempt, the mingling of rustic simplicity and pure intellectual daring that marked him, the fine old-world stateliness of the outward man with the picturesque singularity of the chosen dress: in all and every point there was the full measure of character allowable to a man of genius. The interest of anecdotal matter, however, is confined pretty much to those who knew Mr. Gilfillan, and they are well acquainted with it, or easily can be. The Rev. David Macrae's little book is a lively and pictorial summary of the personal items, given along with a particular view of Mr. Gilfillan's theological championship. There are others of the lighter sort in private circulation. The way he would suddenly

explode, at a soiree or any other gathering, with a "Toots! the man's an idiot," and seizing hat and stick march out; the way he wrote his letters—a meander of curious but not so very illegible aphorisms or declamations on a split sheet of note-paper; the way he kept letters and papers, in a huge bag that used to be emptied on the floor when something was wanted; his self-will in certain small matters, and his submission to friends and to wife in the crises which his own vehemence provoked; his utterance of all the sentiments which most persons of station and influence learn to consume in private, and along with this, a deep fund of magnanimity which has never had proper recognition though it was not the least marked of his traits: here is abounding material for anecdote, and no doubt it will long linger about his memory. Mr. Gilfillan became, as they say, an institution of the city in which he spent his life. He twisted his blue comforter round his neck and "went down town" to visit or speak, to walk along the shore, or merely to get shaved; and whatever the errand, it was among his own people, who knew him. During his time, Dundee was a homely and friendly town; the merchants and manufacturers knew each other, and there was much simple hospitality and mutual acquaintance. Through nieces and nephews, through his congregation, and chiefly through his own public work and fame, Mr. Gilfillan became a leading citizen. His dwelling was in a side street near to main arteries of business and in the centre of the town, which still held itself together in close quarters between the Law and the river and kept a more homogeneous modest existence than it does now. Paradise Manse was as well known as the famous

house in Cheyne Row, and dispensed a freer hospitality. Gilfillan trod with full right "the plainstones" of Dundee High Street, and every one knew him. He went with all the air of a chief newly come down from the glens, but any child could thrust a little hand upon him and claim the attention of the minister: there was always something simple in the broad port and the thrown-back head.

Many of the stories relate to his *alter ego* as much as to himself. She was even more at home in the commercial city than he was, for in her nature all the main elements of the Teutonic race showed themselves. For once the woman knew more of the world—the work-a-day practical world—than the man did, had more humour of the shrewd incisive sort, understood the bearings of things better. He was not fit to be trusted with money—and he agreed that, as a rule, he should carry none about him. He was at times hardly fit to be trusted with pen and ink, and he allowed her to say when the demonic element had run away with him, and the prudent Teutonic bridle must be thrown over it. Perhaps it was the most real marriage ever made—of like to unlike, agreeing in difference—and it is certainly unique in literary history. They differed in opinion, temperament, and habit, and made no disguise. Neither took the same view of life as the other; each remained individual to the last: but it was a union of heart and conscience, and when the end came the survivor said—"I felt as if I had been thrown against a stone wall, and knew nothing but the stun."

Though she greatly influenced his life she could not make him other than he was; nor could he, who influenced so many, win her out of her native



entrenchments; yet the same people loved them both, and admired her sagacious orderliness as much as his intellectual freedom and force. The life they lived together did honour to them both, and to the Puritanism out of which they both sprang.

Of the closing months interesting records are found in letters to Mr. William Allan, Sunderland, with whom he kept up close correspondence to the last. Writing on the 20th May, 1878, Mr. Gilfillan says: "This has been the saddest spring I almost ever experienced. The death of my brother-in-law, James Vallentine, a dear friend as well as brother, the east winds, and the Synod have been a complication of troubles which have awfully depressed me. 'Oh that I had wings like a dove!' I do mean to retire from this kind of life to literary leisure by-and-by; but I won't go off immediately: it would gratify some too much and grieve others. Still I am heavy-laden just now. Burns is moving very slowly, although my part of it is about done." From Stonehaven, on the 16th July, he again wrote to Mr. Allan: "I am here for a holiday. There is good bathing ground, and the scenery around is rocky, bold, yet beautiful. I am busy, or have been busy not only with Burns, but with an Orkney poet, John Malcolm, long dead, of whom I have written a longish life and criticism since I came here. He might have been almost my grandfather; but I am his spiritual father now. My title is *Pater Poetarum*." The last letter bears date 7th August, 1878: "I fear the tour won't work. My wife frowns on it; my nephew cannot get away; and my publisher to-day threatens me with a speedy profusion of proofs. I write in *torture*. I awoke this morning with

severe pains in my arms, and breast, and sides, and have them still. . . . Well, we can't be always well ; and I have been unusually so. The weather is probably the cause of my illness." The tour was one in which Mr. Allan was to have been a companion. The week proposed for it brought the call to another journey.

The end fell sudden and soon, with singular drama of its own. For more than forty years a strenuous round of labour and a yet more strenuous circle of human thought had been filled. A full measure of life had been experienced—all that goes to a man's hope, and endeavour, and agony—in poetic passion, labouring personality, strong affections, ambitious aspirations ; in social toil and love, in "remote" and unassisted travail. The height had been trodden in strange fierce rapture, the deep sounded in black hours of lonely torment. Few have known more of what the heart can traverse and dread on its dim and perilous way, or what it can arrogate to itself in wild sweet journeys, and swift flights out of time and sense. Few have more passionately urged the question that is answered in one brief word—and in one only. To the world generally it seemed that Gilfillan was settling into the ripe October season, the *Sturm und Drang* all over, the eldern time of interest in young lives and young marriages come on, with full relish for all the old debates and enthusiasms, but a calmer will, a steadier pulse. And to some extent it was so. He travelled and tasted the joy of new mountain-lands, comparing them with the old ; he had a host of friends and enough money for all wants. Outwardly, there was every indication of health and mental verve, and a green old age. Only a few noted the

intangible shadow that began to lie upon lip and brow, and no one but himself suspected that the last journey might have to be taken soon. People heard him preach, and the old heat was there ready to leap at a spark; they met him in the street, and as one said who saw him two days before the final one, "he was as jovial as ever under his wide awake." The Synod of the Church had been in controversy that year with Dr. Ferguson—one of its deepest thinkers—and Gilfillan, roused in his lair, had given forth indignation, sympathy, scathing.

It was the last storm; perhaps it hastened the hush. He showed signs occasionally of illness and of that pathetic desire to be gentle and patient which has warning in it. On the eighth day of August he allowed a medical gentleman to be sent for and to examine the heart. Some disease was found, but nothing that might not continue sub-acute for a while. He was not forbidden to preach, and on the following Sunday he filled his own pulpit as usual; and yet not as usual, for the whole afternoon service was, in effect, a farewell. All his life he had been sensitive to omens and quick to accept premonitions. Whether the doctor's verdict had been to any extent foreseen we do not know; it was accepted as the beginning of the end. The previous Sabbath morning, too, a Dundee gentleman well known to Mr. Gilfillan, was drowned while bathing before breakfast on the Broughty-Ferry beach. This event was supposed to be the cause of the afternoon sermon seven days later, which brought the hearers into a strange solemnity of feeling and made it seem afterwards the preacher's own funeral sermon. The whole discourse was upon sudden death; no word of it

written, or but the merest outline ; the text that old lament in Job : " Man cometh forth as a flower and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not." He spoke, in his old rich way, of the glory of the summer and of " the golden sea of grain covering the glens and straths of Scotland," mingling with his picture an almost lurid warning that " the bright day brings forth the adder." He surveyed the world and saw the angel of death stooping over the harvest fields, the cities and the sea, and then he glorified the swift stroke that so easily parted the servant of God from earthly chain and lingering unanswered question. The name of Arnold of Rugby came in ; last of the many he had loved to introduce to the multitude. The hymns, it was noticed, were all in accord, " Sun of my soul " closing the service ; and by Mr. Gilfillan's own direction the organ played " The Dead March in Saul," while the people dispersed and he went down from the pulpit which, more than any chair of literary fame and influence, had been to him the centre and sanction of life.

On Tuesday one of the dear bright nieces—Mittan-nus—was to be married from Arnhall, and Mr. and Mrs. Gilfillan went as far as Brechin on the Monday afternoon. He was quite cheerful and his best self ; no one immediately anxious about him. He loved Esk-side we know, and the Vallentines. It was just forty-three years since he found " Margaret " and fixed himself on her for life. The evening was cheerful, all going gaily as a marriage bell. Then, early on Tuesday morning came the fatal touch—keen pain, sudden alarm, the rousing of the household, the call for help, the question and answer ; " I am dying, doctor ?"—" Yes, you are dying ;" and the man



replied, "The will of the Lord be done." With that, Gilfillan went forth. In a few minutes the fight with time and sense was past, the soul clove its way to the freedom so passionately sought. "Christ is with you," his wife had said, during the short hour that yet, to him, seemed a long pain. "Yes," he answered, "I believe in God, in Christ."

So he had his wish: to go quickly, and in the neighbourhood of a loved spot: "If I had my choice," he once wrote, "of a spot to die at, it would be the neighbourhood of the Burn; and were disembodied spirits permitted, in Byron's fine thought, to choose some particular scene for a sanctuary, mine should be found by the side of those dark rolling waters, those shadow-like bridges, and those clustering woods."

Not for long had the news of a death sent so keen a thrill through Scotland as the electric wires carried that Tuesday afternoon, the 13th day of August, 1878. Men saw it on placards, were told it by others, and felt that a vivid interest had suddenly dropped from their lives, from the general atmosphere. "Gilfillan is dead!"—newly out of his pulpit, in all the stately force of unimpaired manhood; he seemed to have fallen there, upon the familiar street, and a hush went through the town. Every one knew his face, most had some sense of his warm and honest heart, many had felt the original flavour of him and the colour which he drew out of and threw around existence. It was the same wherever he was known, among the ranks of those to whom his writings had conveyed a secret and an inspiration.

They chose his grave in a fit place, one of the finest spots of that hill-cemetery, west of the city, which commands all the line of the strath from the

opening of the Earn valley, to the river mouth and the sea. A public funeral is not the highest tribute of respect, perhaps, but this one was simple, spontaneous, and most moving. On Saturday, just on the closing of the factories, they carried the remains to rest, the congregation, the Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the trade companies, and other public bodies following, and the general population crowding, silently and sadly, the long line of road by which the procession went from "George's Chapel," under the shadow of Dundee's Old Steeple to the Hill of Balgay. There were more than a thousand in the funeral train : it was that of a distinguished citizen, mourned by all classes, and most of all by the multitude to whom the fame of the literary man is far less than that of the Christian preacher and friend.

It is quite impossible, in our closing space, to give selections from the mass of memorial notices. They are very interesting, and show the strong grip of Gilfillan's manhood upon other men, young ministers and writers, old friends in all ranks of society, even opponents now startled into some justice. The press gave innumerable recollections of him, and they cover the various aspects of his life. A little book issued from the office of the *Dundee Advertiser* contains many of these, two by Mr. Landreth, with an account of the closing scenes, and a report of Mr. Gilfillan's last sermon taken from notes made by a member of the congregation. One private letter we are permitted to quote, by the kindness of the honoured writer, Dr. Hutchison Stirling, whose judgment is above question. Writing to Mrs. Gilfillan on 20th August, Dr. Stirling conveys to her a message from Mr. Charles A. Ward, the "Burghley" of the

journal and one of the few friends of her husband not also a correspondent of hers. Dr. Stirling continues:—

“Mr. Ward’s letter, I need hardly say, found me in his own case, and his hesitating wish, uniting with my own, was just what was needed to give me an excuse for following the dictates of my heart. I most deeply deplore with you the too early loss of this invaluable life. The sad news shocked me and deeply grieved. The Church has lost its most eloquent and honest pastor; literature its foremost and most genial critic—a man of true genius who could not write a sentence that had not, in some way, the virtue of his inspiration in it. What you have lost, dear madam, even such mere guild friends as myself can have no difficulty in concluding.

“The warm, eager tenderness that was a fostering boon to so many in the public must, after all, have found its best and truest seat at home.”

Following that, let one of Gilfillan’s old and admiring intimates, Mr. Logan, be heard as to one side of his nature:—“In the last note I received from my cherished friend, only a week before he was taken from us, he spoke of hearing the Rev. James M’Owan of St. Andrews preach in Newport, ‘an interesting, earnest, and useful sermon.’ The spirit of this note was in fine keeping with hundreds it was my privilege to receive from him, especially about ministerial brethren of his own and other denominations. At the very time he might be hitting hard at a man in public, on some point of difference of opinion, I have known him writing kindly words about the same person in private. Often he has written to myself urging the claims of some one who was in need, although that same man had written bitterly against himself in

public, and he would tell me at the same time that he had sent on his own 'mite.' Many a time I advised Gilfillan to be more careful in his public utterances, but I never for a moment doubted his own heart-interest in the glorious Gospel he so long preached to others. His was a laborious, singularly unselfish, and useful life."

Two estimates full of affectionate understanding, have been contributed to this volume by Mr. Leng, the senior Member of Parliament for Dundee, whose knowledge of Mr. Gilfillan was long and intimate, and by Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple. The contributions speak for themselves, and with them our memorial closes.

Mr. Leng writes from Kinbrae, Newport, Fife :—

"The name of George Gilfillan first attracted my attention about the year 1848, when it was part of my duty, as sub-editor of an English Provincial paper, to review the monthly magazines. His brilliant and sparkling essays and criticisms on the Poets in *Hogg's Instructor* and *Tait's Magazine* were then eagerly looked for, month after month, and at once delighted, informed, and stimulated youthful and receptive minds. Some time about 1849 or 1850 he was announced to lecture at the Hull Mechanics' Institution. From reading his estimates of the Poets, so sparkling, sympathetic, and imaginative, I anticipated that he would be a semi-ethereal being, cast in a poetic mould, and was surprised when he came on the platform to see his stalwart frame and ruddy countenance, and to hear his vigorous and rugged Doric, which some of his audience scarcely understood. His lecture, however, impressed me as



that of a man of rare potentiality, and at its close, when I informed him that I was one of his critics, he gave me the first of the many friendly shakes of his hand I subsequently enjoyed.

"On coming to Dundee, in 1851, I soon found my way to 'Paradise,' as his manse was curiously called, and was welcomed to the hospitality extended by him and Mrs. Gilfillan to all who came. There was a double charm in that United Presbyterian Manse, in the distinct and almost equally notable personalities of the minister and his wife. The former drew to him, from far and near, youthful aspirants to literary culture and fame, who looked up to the then great popular critic as the arbiter of their destiny. His appearance, his manner, and his utterances, were all, to them, those of a literary lion, and they admired when they did not tremble at the toss of his head, the shake of his mane, or the roar of his voice. It amused him sometimes to frighten his cubs, but his kindly nature predominated, and he more often pawed them, in his desire to lick them into shape. They never came away without being impressed by the flashing fire of his eyes, his vivid delineations of what he had seen, his wonderful memory of whatever he had read, his fierce onslaughts on whatever he condemned, and his enthusiastic commendation of whatever he approved. Every one felt that George Gilfillan was not only a big man, but that he had a big heart as well as a big head.

"Mrs. Gilfillan, again, without children of her own, became a second mother to all who entered 'Paradise.' The very model of a Scotch housewife, every room in 'Paradise' was always perfect in its neatness, simplicity, and comfort. Without luxury or waste,

the table was always fully spread, covered with abundance of food, and everything the best of its kind. No one that entered the door was ever sent empty away. Nor was she a Martha, burdened with household cares. She was able to take her part, and hold her own in any conversation, and many a pawky, and wise, and humorous remark came from her without any effort or sign of self-consciousness or desire for applause. One of the kindest, most sensible and devoted of women, Mrs. Gilfillan will be long remembered by every visitant of the manse she adorned.

“My acquaintance with George Gilfillan ripened into a life-long friendship, which no differences of opinion ever disturbed. He soon became, at my request, a regular contributor to the *Dundee Advertiser*, and for many years was its principal reviewer of books. Never was there a steadier or more industrious worker. I was often astonished at the promptitude with which he would dispose of a large volume or parcel of books, not merely by ‘cutting the leaves and smelling the paper-knife,’ but in a way showing that he had mastered the contents. His criticisms were always racy. Whatever he wrote had the eminent merit of being exceedingly readable. His versatility, too, was extraordinary. When the British Association visited Dundee in 1867 I asked him to write sketches of the leading scientists, and he did them admirably. He subsequently wrote biographical notices of eminent men in all the highest walks of life—some of which appeared long after his own decease—and they were always done in a manner few could equal, either in fulness of information or vivacity of style.

"I should like to say that I have found his edition of the 'Poets,' published by Nichol, the most readable in my library, where it is assigned a place of honour. Of his speeches, often sitting with him on the same platform, I can testify that few men could rouse a Scottish, and especially a Dundee, audience to such enthusiasm as he in his thundering denunciations of wrong or overpowering appeals for right. The deep, convulsive sobs, that sometimes sounded like moans from his cavernous voice, often gave a weird effect to his oratory."

Among the biographical papers which Mr. Leng refers to in these graphic notes, was one on Longfellow, prepared by Mr. Gilfillan on a false rumour of the poet's death. It appeared in April, 1882, "like a voice from the dead," expressing the admiration Gilfillan always felt for the simple, cordial genius of Longfellow, and which, as we know, Longfellow repaid with steady esteem. One who visited the American poet shortly after Gilfillan's death, had from his own lips his opinion of the man he had never seen, but admired and held as a friend. "Mr. Longfellow expressed his high admiration of Gilfillan's endowments" (Mr. Stuart Muir in the *Edinburgh Courier*). So different were the two that this appreciation has the more value.

We end with Dr. Parker's eloquent tribute. He writes, under date 28th July, 1892 :—

"Your note finds me at Southport on my way to Windermere. I am glad Gilfillan is to have a Life. You will spend strength upon it I am sure. George cannot be 'done' with a wave of the hand. I feel as if I ought to have at least a little finger in the pie,

but how can I write away from the ink-horn and pen which know me best? How is it that all other pens have no go in them, and are fit only for invoices and labels? This pen, however, is friendlier than many others; so, what do you say, if here, and now, without loss of one minute, I put down the outline of mind and body which fills my grateful memory? Gilfillan came to preach for me in Manchester, and once, when he lectured there, he had dinner and tea at my house, so we saw the giant close at hand, and weighed him and measured him without coming to exact figures in either case. He was in very deed a big man—big altogether, in head and heart, in physical avoirdupois and mental troy. He only knew a very little part of himself—of his own personality there were outlying districts, almost provinces, which he had not laid under adequate cultivation, and which were full of mines and treasure-trove. I am not sure that cultivation, in any pedantic sense, had much to do with Gilfillan's greatness. The difference between him and most other men was the difference between an egg and an eagle. Gilfillan was alight with the glory of genius. He discovered nothing; he seemed to know intuitively. He saw from afar. What, then, if in his seeing men found haze, aerial colour, and a perspective that brought parallels to angles and so upset the popular geometry? Gilfillan seemed to start life without any special regard for Euclid; not that he ever spoke disrespectfully of squares and triangles, but to him they were nowhere beside the gospel-breathing flowers and the apocalyptic clouds. The woman standing in the sun was no miracle to Gilfillan; the miracle would have been to find a woman in any other place. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation were



written in his mother tongue. He understood them and loved them and simplified them by other images. Did Gilfillan ever think but in metaphor? Did he ever hear of a syllogism, that mental porridge of the Scot?—Or, hearing of it, did he leave it that he might accept a higher and diviner hospitality? Porridge or nectar, syllogism or trope, Gilfillan was a well-fed man, so overflowing with life that his touch had healing in it. As a young man I simply revelled in his style, and now that I am no longer young I still find in it a strong man's strength and a good man's tenderness. Of course it is highly coloured; I know it, I admit it, I do not deplore it. Of course it is redundant; quite true—redundant after the manner of old mother nature, so bountiful and so lavish in all her summer ways. Gilfillan's music is the rush of torrents, or the shout of Bashan and Lebanon in the very riotousness of their pride. The lute and the harp were not his favourite instruments, though now and then he could be placid and soothing in his strains. He loved to see the upheaving of mountains, the salutations of passing comets, and Etna signalling to Sirius. All this was quite in his way. It was a great, rugged, royal way, and not the way of the tiny men who have often smiled upon his mannerism. These are the men who mistake fluttering for flying, and a stone-breaker for a sculptor.

“Can I ever forget the sermon Gilfillan delivered in my pulpit in Manchester? Nothing like it was ever seen under the sun. He took the sermon out of his trouser pocket and laid it in little heaps—not of the whitest paper—on the pulpit Bible, and took it up scrap by scrap, and read each at the pulpit lamp as

if he were announcing a bazaar or a tea-meeting. But listen! Shut out the grotesque image of a piece of paper held up to a lamp by a giant in gold spectacles, and listen. How clean cut each sentence! What a figure was that! What a portrait in few words! What an electric-spark sentence! How long, solemn, subduing the voice, dying in a cadence that has in it the moan of a heart-sob! When he announced the hundredth psalm, the word psalm seemed to become a tune in the saying of it. Yes, it was a grand sermon; but it was execrably delivered as a whole. It might have been some other man's sermon, read for the purpose of showing how poor it was. Yet, listen, listen! You will then be charmed and thrilled and blest. First the shock, then the almost-laugh, then the wonder, then the prayer, then the heart-felt thanks. It was very wonderful; and often beautiful exceedingly.

“From a domestic and dining point of view George Gilfillan left us a vivid recollection. It would be too strong a metaphor to describe our honoured guest as an ascetic. He was not, and his ways were not exactly prim. In the upper room he rubbed his glorious head and face with a towel and then threw the towel upon a swing-mirror. Coming downstairs he vigorously stirred the fire with our best tongs, and then threw the tongs under the bars with a fine disregard of domestic perspective. I remember well that on the day of Mr. Gilfillan's dining with us we had an afternoon engagement at five o'clock which we could not put off. Should we ask him to stay to tea? We had to start soon after four, so what time was there for tea? Mr. Gilfillan settled the business

for us, for immediately after dinner he drew his chair to the fire and said, 'We maun have tea early.' Thus do the Invisibles work kindly for us if we will but let them alone and cease to fret about the coming and going of daily life.

"To return. Gilfillan's style has been described as turgid, bombastic, and artificial. There are men who can use such words quite glibly in describing other men's literary method. Gilfillan's style may be all they say; but under this style lies the bold and burning thought. What of that? Besides, nature has many expressions. Her chariots, like her Lord's, are twenty-thousand, and her angels are thousands of thousands. Think of the Ganges rebuking the Atlantic! Think of the bantam regarding the eagle as an exaggeration. Every man in his own order, and God for us all, should be our motto. Gilfillan had his royal way and royally he pursued it. Blessing on his memory! Honour to his high name!"

## A P P E N D I X.

DR. ROBERTSON NICOLL has kindly sent the following, addressed to him on 26th November, 1892, by Mr. Hall Caine :—

“I rejoice to hear that a life of Gilfillan is to be published. That he should have gone so long unhonoured of the biographer would be a matter of astonishment to me if I did not know that even more than imaginative writing, which has its forms and fashions, its whims and idiosyncrasies that come and go, criticism, however excellent, is apt to pass away with the hour that produces it. But in simple truth, Gilfillan was a man of many and various gifts, and if as a poet he lacked the vitalising touch of imagination, as a critic he had that insight and sympathy which is the half-brother of creative genius. The literary critic is apt to be narrower than the poet, the dramatist, and the novelist in taste and judgment. He who makes demand of the frugality and severity of our eighteenth century style is often unable to appreciate the romantic temper of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. We might easier expect Pope to write with the spirit of Coleridge, or Fielding to produce the novels of George Eliot, than look for any right understanding of Wordsworth in Jeffrey, or of Dickens in the worshippers of Ibsen. The critical intellect appears to have been a very unelastic thing in all ages, but there have



always been brilliant exceptions to the rule, and Gilfillan must be reckoned as one of them. That he was a warm appreciator, that he knew the value of enthusiasm, that he could be catholic and yet by no means wanting in strong conviction, that he could love and hate and still be bound by no narrow prejudices or predilections, his editions of the Poets sufficiently show. These were, I well remember, favourite books with Rossetti, and many an evening I can recall when he would take down from the shelf one or other of the large-page volumes and read aloud from its easy type. Rossetti thought Gilfillan sound as a critic, if sometimes overwrought and 'tall.'

"I have also my own selfish reason for remembering that Gilfillan was a generous appreciator. Somewhere as far back as 1870 I wrote a very long poem, which was printed and published four years later by a publisher of more enterprise than intelligence. Two years after that I sent a copy of it to Gilfillan. I was unknown to him, and he had no inducement to give me more attention than the man of letters usually pays to the hundred and one aspirants who seek his counsel. Gilfillan was a man of much mark at that time, writing frequently, lecturing constantly, travelling a good deal, and still preaching every week. Nevertheless he read my poem, and wrote me two letters about it of so much warmth of praise, yet so much candour of criticism, that my ambition, if it had ever smouldered, must have been fired afresh, and my best energies put on their mettle. . . . I have disappointed Gilfillan's predictions, but I am none the less touched by the recollection of his encouragement. When I came up to London six years later, I had one surprise awaiting me, and that was the surprise, and indeed the shock, of finding that hardly any of the literary people whom I met with knew anything about Gilfillan, and that the great poet I have mentioned was literally the only man known to me who spoke of him with genuine warmth of praise. So soon can true and honest work in literature be overlooked ;

so easily can generous criticism be forgotten ; of such stuff is the 'memory' of the half-posterity to which the literary man so proudly appeals ! ”

We are obliged to Mr. Hall Caine for one of the letters referred to. It is dated 23rd February, 1876. Mr. Gilfillan says :—

“ I have snatched an hour or two to-night from my sterner duties to look over your poem. I admire much in it. I have marked some passages, and could have marked more which have, it seems to me, the true ring of genius. Indeed, it altogether abounds with fine fancy, and shows excellent descriptive powers. I notice, on the other hand, a great many peculiarities or affectations of language, a few of which I have also marked, and which can easily be remedied.

“ The great defect is, I think, obscurity. The story does not tell itself distinctly, and that is a defect which the public is less disposed than the critics to pardon. The critics have been reduced by the examples of Browning, &c., to be too lenient to this defect, and have succeeded in forcing thus into the market a great quantity of matter which lies in libraries and on drawing-room tables, but is seldom read. Critics can get people to buy, but not to read. This is the old story of one man bringing a horse to the water, but twenty not being able to get him to drink. Your poem has genius, but it does not draw you on in the stream of its story, and would therefore not succeed—in the true sense of success. I doubt even if it would sell.

“ Try some other theme, and treat it in a more popular way. Read for this purpose Robert Buchanan's 'White Rose and Red,' and mark the flow and clearness of his verse. He, too, began with mysticism.”

## PUBLICATIONS OF MR. GILFILLAN.

THE following list of Mr. Gilfillan's publications does not profess to be complete. Many of his contributions to periodicals are unsigned and cannot be traced to him with absolute certainty; the authorship of most of the following has, however, been verified otherwise than by internal evidence. No attempt is made to give year by year the reviews and articles contributed to the *Dundee Advertiser* and other newspapers. Too numerous for individual mention, they are of great literary interest, and show that in the last period of his life he was keenly alive to every note of excellence, and writing as freely and strongly as ever.

1827. Article in *British Farmers' Magazine*.

1839. Articles on Professor Wilson and Dr. Chalmers in *Edinburgh University Magazine*.

1840. FIVE DISCOURSES.

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1841. Articles in *Dumfries Herald*, on Coleridge, Shelley, Preachers, Bible Poetry, Peebles.

1842. Articles in *Dumfries Herald*, on Brougham, Godwin, Allan Cunningham.

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1843. Articles in *Dumfries Herald*, on Ebenezer Elliott, Campbell, and others.

1845. Articles in *Dumfries Herald*, on Tennyson, Pollock, and others.

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1846. In *Hogg's Instructor*, on Thomas Moore, Dr. Thomas Brown, General Characteristics of Modern British Poetry, Female Authors, Popular and Cheap Literature.  
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1847. In *Hogg's Instructor*, on Books, Reminiscences of a Tour through England (five papers).  
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1848. In *Hogg's Instructor*, on Dr. Jamieson, Dr. G. Croly, Dr. Ferrier, Life of Sterling, Samuel Gilfillan, and W. Anderson, Poetry of Thomas Aird.  
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1849. INTRODUCTION to Longfellow's Poems (Liverpool).  
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1850. In *Eclectic*, on Southey's Life, "Galileo Galilei," De Quincey, Wordsworth, "The Roman," Smibert's "Clans of the Highlands."  
In *Palladium*, on Emerson's "Representative Men," Great Poem Mysteries—Job, E. B. Browning, Margaret Fuller, and George Sand.  
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In *Eclectic*, on Joanna Baillie, D. M. Moir's Lectures, Recent Poetry and A. Smith, Carlyle's Sterling.



- THE APOCALYPSE OF JESUS CHRIST, a sermon.  
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1852. In *Critic*, Review of Aird's Memoir of D. M. Moir (two  
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 PREFACE to Poems of W. Neveay, Forfar.  
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     Milton, 2 vols.,  
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THE GROANS OF THE CREATION and the glorious liberty of the children of God, a discourse.

## 1856. Library Edition of the Poets :—

Burns, 2 vols.,

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THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE, a sermon.

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In *Titan*, Morning with the Muses.In *Critic*, "Modern Scottish Minstrel" (two papers), Review of Aird's Poems.

GALLERIES OF LITERARY PORTRAITS (two volume edition, James Hogg), 326 and 368 pp.

## 1857. Library Edition of the Poets :—

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CHRISTIAN MISSIONS, a sermon.

In "Dumfries Album," on Burke as a historian.

In *Scottish Review*, on American Poets and Poetry, Self-teaching and Self-taught Authors, the Bible and the Rocks, the late Dr. Samuel Brown.In *Critic*, Reviews of "The Philosophy of the Bible," "Edinburgh Dissected," Aird's "Old Bachelor," "Modern Scottish Minstrel," Smith's "City Poems," De Quincey's "Sketches."

CHRISTIANITY AND OUR ERA (James Hogg), 478 pp.

## 1858. Library Edition of the Poets :—

Percy's Reliques, 3 vols.,

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In *Scottish Review*, on Henry Rogers, Edmund Burke and India, Rev. John Caird, Robert Alfred Vaughan.In *Critic*, on "Modern Scottish Minstrel," De Quincey's Works (four papers), Jamieson's Poems, Jackson's Poems, Burghley's "Preaching and Puseyism."In *Titan*, on Literature, Painting, and Beauty.

PREFACE to Jean Hamilton's Poems.

## 1859. Library Edition of the Poets :—

Spenser, 5 vols.,

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In *Scottish Review*, on Carlyle's "Frederick," Masson's "Milton," Novels and Novel Writers, Tennyson's "Idylls."In *Titan*, Strictures on "Thorndale," Douglas Jerrold.

## 1860. Library Edition of the Poets :—

Chaucer, 3 vols.,

Selections, 3 vols.

ALPHA AND OMEGA ; or, a series of Scripture studies, 2 vols. (A. Hall, Virtue &amp; Co.), 374 and 370 pp.

In *Scottish Review*, on Professor Nichol, Notes on Norway.

DEBASING AND DEMORALIZING INFLUENCES of Slavery, a lecture.

1861. In *Scottish Review*, Notes on Norway, continued.1862. In *Scottish Review*, Memoirs and Memoir Writers, British and American Literature, Recent Poetry, Remains and Memorials of Shelley, Christopher North.(?)1863. In *Christian Spectator*, on Spinoza.1866. In *Pulpit Analyst*, on Christian Simplicity, Chalmers and Arnold, Robertson of Brighton, "Ecce Homo" (two papers).

## 1867. NIGHT : A POEM (Jackson, Walford, and Hodder), 339 pp.

In *Pulpit Analyst*, on Dr. W. Anderson, Rev. J. Everett, Rev. Samuel Gilfillan, Dr. Croly, Dr. John Bruce, Rev. T. Spencer, Rev. John Jameson, Rev. G. Steward, Rev. A. Stewart, Rev. J. Morrell Mackenzie, Star Dust, or Miscellaneous Sketches.

These were gathered into a volume :—

REMOTER STARS IN THE CHURCH SKY (Jackson, Walford, and Hodder), 171 pp.

In *Dundee Advertiser* (from 20th August to 4th September), on Sir Charles Lyell, Professor Owen, Sir D. Brewster, Sir R. Murchison, Professor Huxley, Professor Phillips, Principal Forbes, Professor J. H. Balfour, Professor Airy, Professor Rankine, Sir S. Baker, M. E. Grant Duff, Esq., Professor Tyndall.

1869. MODERN CHRISTIAN HEROES, a Gallery of  
Protesting and Reforming Men (Elliot Stock), 312 pp.  
Includes Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, The Puritans, The  
Scottish Covenanters, The Secession and Relief Churches,  
The Rise of Methodism (these papers were previously con-  
tributed to *Forward*).
1870. LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET (Oliphant)  
2nd Edition, 1871, 384 pp.  
In *People's Friend*, Autumnal Rambles in Various Lands  
—Norway (eleven papers), Scotland (twenty-two papers).
1871. In *Dundee Advertiser*, among the books reviewed by Mr.  
Gilfillan were the following:—"The Jephtha and the Baptist,"  
by George Buchanan, translated by A. Gibb; "The True  
Vine," by Rev. H. Macmillan; "Quiet Hours," by John  
Pulsford; "The Scottish Kirk," by Rev. John Guthrie;  
"Life and Letters of Hugh Miller," by Peter Bayne (three  
notices); "The Life and Times of Lord Brougham;"  
"Sermons," by Rev. F. Ferguson; "The Songstresses of  
Scotland," by Sarah Tytler and J. L. Watson; "The Great  
Social Evil," by W. Logan; "Peeps at the Far East," by Dr.  
Norman Macleod; "Life and Labours of Duncan Matheson,"  
by Rev. John Macpherson; "The Sacrifice of Isaac, a  
Poem," by Rev. Thomas Tilston. [This is but a specimen of  
the work done for the *Advertiser* during many years.]
1872. In "The Shores of Fife" (Edmonston and Douglas),  
Article—Historical and Descriptive Notes on Falkland Palace,  
Loch Leven, &c., 15 pp.  
In *People's Friend*, To Switzerland and back (eleven  
papers), Run to North Wales and a few steps beyond (seven  
papers).
1873. LIFE OF THE REV. WILLIAM ANDERSON, LL.D.,  
Glasgow (Hodder & Stoughton), 414 pp.
1875. PREFACE to Poems of A. Anderson, Kirkconnel.
1876. In *Celtic Magazine*, a Defence of Ossian, The Massacre of  
Glencoe.
1877. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST, a sermon (published 1886).  
In *Celtic Magazine*, on Lyrical Poetry.
1878. LIFE OF BURNS in the National Edition of the Works  
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ESSAY on Life and Writings of David Vedder, prefixed to  
his Poems (William Peace & Son, Kirkwall).  
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## INDEX.

- ABERDEEN, visit to, 379.  
 Advent, Second, 138, 272, 400.  
 Aird, Thomas, 23, 64, 76, 107, 118,  
     141; illness of, 147, 148; notice  
     of, 174; Carlyle writes to, 175;  
     Aird to Gilfillan, 175; death of,  
     177; his father's death, 223;  
     testimonial to, 274, 284; letters  
     to, 177-238, 425, 435, 437.  
 Airlie, Den of, 284.  
 Allan, William, 444.  
 Allegory, 168.  
 "Alpha and Omega," 231.  
 American War, 279, 280.  
 "Anastasis," 128.  
 Anderson, Dr. W., 257, 271, 339.  
 Anderson ("Surfaceman"), 162.  
 Anti-slavery meeting, 271.  
 Associate Synod, 5.  
 Astronomy, 351.  
 Autumn, 325.  
 Awakening from sleep, 270.  
 Aytoun, W. E., 213; and his allies,  
     389.
- BAILEY, P. J., 169.  
 "Balder," 170, 172, 201, 366.  
 Balmer, Professor, 44.  
 "Bards of the Bible," 88, 107;  
     richness and profusion of, 109;  
     success of, 152; plan of, 177;  
     finished, 188.
- Barlas, Rachel, married to Samuel  
     Gilfillan, 8; character, 11; her  
     religion, 12; her illness, 202;  
     her death, 205; her grave, 171.  
 Bayne, Peter, LL.D., 207.  
 Begg, Dr., 219.  
 Beggars, 304.  
 Belfast English Literature Chair,  
     180.  
 Beveridge, George, 39, 251.  
 Bigg, J. Stanyan, 163, 207, 236,  
     394; letters to, 395, 414, 415.  
 Binney, Rev. T., 158.  
 Blackie, Dr. J. S., 178.  
 Blair, Dr. W., 438.  
 Blairgowrie, 382.  
 Borwick, Rev. J., 346.  
 Brechin, 266.  
 Bristol, 211.  
 Broad Church party, 331.  
 Brown, Dr. S., 66; lectures in  
     Dundee, 68; notice of, 121;  
     letter of, to Mrs. Gilfillan, 121;  
     letters to, 122-131; Aird on,  
     125; Gilfillan on, 142; creed of,  
     155; his energy, 163; his "Gal-  
     ileo," 183; dispute with the  
     *Banner*, 184; paper on, 215.  
 Browning, A., Tillicoultry, 323,  
     335.  
 Brougham, 329.  
 Buchanan, George, 207.

- Buchanan, Professor, 35.  
 Burghley, 220, 227, 228, 258, 267, 322.  
 Burke, 208.  
 Burns, 393.
- CAINE, Hall, 459.  
 Caird, Principal, 278.  
 Cairns, Dr. John, 22, 255, 284, 285,  
 Calvinism, 12, 24. [343.  
 Campbell, Rev. Mr., Aberdour, 252.  
 Campbell, Thomas, Rector of Glas-  
 gow University, 33; his poetry,  
 288.  
 Carlisle, 237.  
 Carlyle, Dr. John, 190.  
 Carlyle, Thomas, 30, 74, 76; on  
 Gilfillan, 103; his capabilities,  
 110; quoted, 123; creed of, 155;  
 his talk, 179; his "Sterling," 195.  
 Carlylism, 141, 142, 402.  
 Carr, Mr. Frank, 436.  
 Carruthers, Dr., 437.  
 Chalmers, Dr., 22; his "Astro-  
 nomical Discourses," 34; Pro-  
 fessor, 45; preaching, 46.  
 Children, Gilfillan on, 154.  
 Chili, catastrophe in, 363.  
*Christian Magazine*, 8.  
 "Christianity and our Era," 192,  
 201, 209; notices of, 216;  
*résumé* of, 401; characterised,  
 404.  
 Christmas, 241.  
 Churchill, 130, 210.  
 Churchyards, deserted, 105.  
 Claverhouse, 391.  
 Coleridge, S. T., and Hall, 129; on  
 Shakespeare, 288.  
 Coleridgism, 140.  
 Coming men, 276.  
 Comrie, 128, 199, 228, 251, 281.  
 "Confession of Faith," 434.  
 Covenanters, essay on, 36, 326.  
 "Covenant, Scottish, Martyrs, &c., of,"  
 161; success of the book, 162;  
 composition of, 197; published,  
 197; republished, 285; quoted,  
 391.  
 Cowper, 201.  
 Crabbe, portrait of, 96.  
*Critic, The*, 153, 202.  
 Croly, Dr. G., 136, 192, 212, 234,  
 286.  
 Cymbeline, 382.  
 Cumming, Dr., 306.
- "DARK Disarrangements," 145.  
 Davidson, Dr. S., 344.  
 De Quincey, 62, 80, 120, 206, 232.  
 Delta (D. M. Moir), 151, 152; his  
 death, 191; memoir of, 196, 220.  
 Dick, Professor, 43.  
 Dobell, Sydney, on Gilfillan, 72;  
 notice of, 132; letters of Gilfil-  
 lan to, 132-173; his "Roman,"  
 185; his youth, 192.  
 Doubt, 357.  
 Douglass, Frederick, 79.  
 Dreams, 324, 364, 371.  
 Dryden, 208.  
 Duncan, Professor, 43.
- EADIE, Dr., 46, 126, 190.  
 Ebsworth, J. W., 226.  
*Eclectic, The*, 183, 187, 194.  
 Edinburgh, from 1815 to 1835, 44;  
 visits to, 212, 266, 319.  
*Edinburgh University Magazine*,  
 34, 63, 80.  
 Emerson, R. W., 78, 269.  
 Erskine, Thomas, of Linlathen, 76,  
 77, 181.  
 Everett, Rev. J., 326, 371.  
 Exeter Hall, 157.  
 "FATHERHOOD of God," 168, 396.

Fettercairn, 369.

Feudal System, 4.

"Firmilian," 389.

"Five Discourses," 63.

Foster, 247.

"GALLERY of Literary Portraits,"  
the First, 99, 119; success of, 135;  
the Second, 182, 185; the Third,  
396.

Gardiner, Dr. A., 266.

Gilfillan, George, his birth, 13; his father's influence, 15; religion, 21; influence of nature, 28; goes to Glasgow University, 31; love of books, 32; on Chalmers, 34; at the Logic class, 35; fellow-students, 36; internal composition, 36; influence of Professor Wilson, 38; choice of the ministry, 41; theological course, 42; in Edinburgh, 46; relations to Wilson, 48; literary disappointment, 49; mission work, 50; recollections of, by Rev. A. Kennedy, 51; licensed, 56; first meeting with Mrs. Gilfillan, 57; preaching, 60, 62; marriage, 60; "Five Discourses," 62; friendship with Thomas Aird, 64; writes in *Dumfries Herald*, 64; rapid writing, 65; friendship with S. Brown, 66; lectures in Dundee, 68; "Hades," 70; dark struggle, 74; First "Gallery," 69, 75; meetings with Carlyle, 74, 76; with Emerson, 78; and Anti-slavery movement, 79; sense of power, 80; first subjects, 81; compared with Burns, 81; with Hazlitt, 82; with Carlyle, 83; literary manner, 84; personal appearance, 85; Carlyle on, 86;

on Hazlitt, 91; on Shelley, 93; on Crabbe, 96; "Bundles of Books," 101; on Miall, Carlyle and M'Cheyne, 102; on novel-reading, 103; sermon to students, 106; "Bards of the Bible," 108; on Psalm cxxxix., 112; and the Presbytery, 116; on preaching, 117; should he remove to London? 249; early associates, 250; college companions, 251; burdened hours, 261; his books, 267; reminiscences, 295, 384; opinions about, 300; on his place in literature, 308; out of literary world, 353; defended by Dr. Anderson, 371; position, 373; feud with Aytoun, 390; literary activity, 394; his judgment sought, 394, 425; separation from literary world, 405; latest work, 406; contrasted with Carlyle, 406; compensations, 414; correspondents of, 418; public addresses, 430; and Church standards, 433; testimonial to, 439; characteristics, 441; closing months, 444; last sermon, 447; death, 448; tribute of Dr. Hutchison Stirling, 450; of John Leng, Esq., 451; of Dr. Joseph Parker, 454; his publications, 459.

GILFILLAN, GEORGE, LETTERS OF:—

TO W. B. ROBERTSON—On "Hades," literary sketches, 115; a visit to Irvine and Ayr, "Gallery," Rev. P. Landreth, 118; on lectures, De Quincey, &c., 119.

TO SAMUEL BROWN—on Carlyle's portrait, Professor Nichol, "Suspiria," 122; the Synod,

Gilfillan, George, Letters of—  
*continued.*

T. Aird, 124; Dr. Eadie, H. M. MacGill, 126; "Anastasis," Sketch of Sandford, 128; private difficulties, Hall and Coleridge, Churchill, 129.

TO SYDNEY DOBELL—"The Roman," "Bards of the Bible," 132; plagiarism, Carlyle, nature, 134; The Vision, First "Gallery," 135; outward appearance, 135; T. Aird, 136; Dobell's theory of Sin, the Second Coming, 137; echoes of denial, 139; width, little enthusiasm in Scotland, 140; literature a passion, 142; "Crazed," 143; lecturing, "Destiny of the Bible," Bailey, 143; future punishment, S. Brown, 145; *Palladium*, T. Aird's illness, 146; "Night," Dr. Croly, 148; Mazzini, Tennyson, Specimens of English Literature, 149; Paradise Lost, 150; Delta's Lectures, 151; Second edition of "Bards," 151; D. M. Moir, 152; *Critic*, "Joint-stock Judgment-seats," 153; children, Carlyle, 154; calling names, sanatory religions, 156; London, F. Newman, Mazzini, T. Binney, 157; E. A. Poe, 160; Covenanters, S. Brown, Ancestry, 161; Plagiarism, Smith's Poems, J. S. Bigg, 162; Thomson, Mrs. Stowe, 164; Herbert, religious doubt, 166; "Fatherhood of God," 167; "Balder," Bailey, 169; judgment of "Balder," 170;

Gilfillan, George, Letters of—  
*continued.*

mother's death, "my twin Bold Conceptions," 171; Kossuth, 172.

TO THOMAS AIRD—"Bards of the Bible," Sterling's Remains, 177; Second "Gallery," lecturing, 178; Exeter Hall, Offer of Belfast English Literature Chair, 179; "Bards," "Galleries," S. Brown's marriage, 180; Carlyle at Linlathen, 181; Sydney Yendys, 182; *Athenæum* onset, Aytoun, "Galileo," 182; S. Brown and the *Banner*, Emerson, 184; Comrie, *Palladium*, 186; Jane Eyre, 187; Lecturing, 188; Dr. John Carlyle, 190; death of D. M. Moir, 191; Croly's new book, Dobell's boyhood, 192; The Exhibition, Henry Melville, 193; Alexander Smith, 193; Kossuth, Carlyle on Sterling, 194; "The Garden and Child," 195; public dinner, "Covenanters," 196; Edition of Poets, 197; Comrie, *Scottish Review*, 199; J. S. Bigg, "My Novel," 200; "Christianity and our Era," 201; Cowper's life, 201; Prof. Wilson's death, mother's illness, 202; anti-popery spirit, 203; mother's death, sorrow and work, 205; De Quincey, J. S. Bigg, 206; P. Bayne, Dryden, Burke, Tulloch, 207; Imaginary Biography, 209; Churchill, "History of a Man," much preaching, 210; journey into England, Bulwer, 211; Aytoun,



Gilfillan, George, Letters of—  
*continued.*

213; sale of "History," old letters, 213; S. Brown, 215; "Christianity and our Era," 216; favourable letters, 216; Dr. Rogers, 218; Comrie, Quarles, 218; A. Smith, Dr. Begg, Dr. Guthrie, 219; Lecture at Liverpool, 219; re-opening of church, 220; Burghley (C. A. Ward), 220; "History of a Man," W. B. Robertson, 221; Aird's father's death, Carlyle, 223; "Alpha and Omega," Thorndale, Ebsworth, 224; death of John Gordon, close of the year, Spenser, 225; Masson's "Milton," 226; Burghley, 227; Comrie, Tennyson's "Idylls," autumn, 228; Hawick, Dryburgh, "Scottie," Newcastle, 230; plans, De Quincey, 231; Specimens of poetry, 232; Border tour, William Tait, 232; "Alpha and Omega," Norway, 233; Prof. Blackie, the Poets, 233; Croly's life, revivals, lecture in Glasgow, 234; Congregation, travel, 235; Lake Country, 236; the Exhibition, 238; Manuscripts, 425; Sir T. Sinclair, 435; Dr. Carruthers, 437; Anderson ("Surface-man"), 437.

To J. STANYAN BIGG—"Night and the Soul," London Critics, 394; Reviews, 395; Compensations, 414; Revelation, 415.

To Rev. J. MUIR, 426.

Gilfillan, George, Letters of—  
*continued.*

To Rev. G. Jacque—"Ruins of Hope," 432; Edinburgh Presbytery, 432.

To Rev. W. BLAIR, D.D.—  
Memoir of James Gilfillan, 438.

To WILLIAM ALLAN, 444.

Gilfillan, Mrs (Margaret Vallentine), 57, 60, 443.

Gilfillan, Rev. James, D.D., 438.

Gilfillan, Rev. Samuel, ordained at Comrie, 5; parentage, 6; character, 7; preaching, 7; "Leumas," 8.

Glasgow, Visits to, 194, 340, 377.

Glen, Dr., 303.

Gloag, Dr. Paton, 27.

God, the Unknown, 307.

Gordon, John, 225.

Guthrie, Dr., 219.

"HADES; or, the Unseen," 70, 116, 328.

Hamilton, Janet, 338.

Hamilton, Rev. R. W., 340.

Hamilton, Sir W., 45.

Hawick and neighbourhood, 230.

Hazlitt, 19, 82; portrait of, 90.

Herbert, George, 166.

Highland tour, 312.

"History of a Man, The," 40, 49, 209, 211; sale of, 213, 224; letter about, 369; publication of, 397; conversations in, 398; extract from, 399.

*Hogg's Instructor*, 69, 99.

Hopelessness, 376.

Howie, James, M.D., 35.

Hunt, Leigh, 179.

INDIAN Mutiny, 348, 349.

Intellectual religious life, 21, 405.

Ireland, Alexander, 334.

Irving, Edward, 354.

Italy, oration on, 422.

JACQUE, Rev. G., 432.

Jameson, Rev. John, 24 ; his preaching, 25.

Jamieson, Rev. D., 222, 223.

Jeffrey, Dr. George, 289, 299.

Jeffrey, Dr. R., 380.

Job, Croly on, 286.

John, Gospel of, 320.

Journal, 241-386.

KENNEDY, Rev. A., 51 ; character of, 54.

Kidd, Professor, Aberdeen, 341.

Kinglake, his Crimean War, 272, 278.

Kingsley, Charles, 321.

Knight, Professor, 262, 335, 372.

Kossuth, 172, 195.

LANDRETH, Rev. P., quoted, 42 ; correspondent of Gilfillan, 119.

Lamb, Rev. J., 356.

Lednock, The, 29.

Leng, John, Esq., 451.

Leng, Sir W. Christopher, 356.

Letters, old, 213.

Linlithgow, 361.

Literary Portraits, 89.

Literature, religious, 295.

Liverpool, Lectures at, 219, 333.

Logan, William, 258, 450.

London, 178, 193, 196, 211, 238.

Longfellow, his "Evangeline," 303, message from, 309.

Lyndhurst, Lord, 331.

Lytton, Sir E. B., 204, 211.

MACAULAY, Article on, 156 ; his jottings, 268.

M'Cheyne, Rev. R. M., 103.

MacGill, Rev. H. M., 299.

M'Gregor Rev. Mr., Nova Scotia, M'Kerrow, Dr., 334. [303.

Macleod, Dr. Alex., 337.

Macrae, Rev. D., 440, 441.

Manchester, 358.

Manuscripts, 386, 425.

Muir, Rev. J., Newtyle, 205.

"My Novel," 200.

NATURE, 246 ; effect of, on Gilfillan, 260.

Newman, F., 157.

Nichol, Professor, 124, 141.

"Night," 264, 270, 283, 293, 316, 347 ; quoted, 412 ; published, 431.

*Palladium, The*, 146, 186, 188.

Parables, *The*, 261.

Parker, Dr. Joseph, 358 ; on Gilfillan, 454.

"Philosophic Feed," 384.

Plagiarism, 162.

Poe, Edgar A., 160.

Poets, Edition of, 163 ; a burden of work, 165 ; proposals for, 198 ; success of, 212 ; Gilfillan's work on, 392.

Poland, 266, 337.

Popery, 204.

Professorship offered to Gilfillan, 180.

Prometheus, 188.

*Pulpit Analyst*, 431.

*Punch*, 275.

Puritanism, 20.

RAINBOWS, 247.

"Reconciliation," quoted, 407.

Renan, 320, 345, 383.

Robertson, Rev. F. W., 268, 372, 417, 419 ; letter from his father, 420.

- Robertson, Dr. W. B., notice of, 115; letters of Gilfillan to, 115-120.
- Robinson Crusoe, 306.
- "Roman, The," 133.
- Rome, 423.
- Rossetti, D. G., 389.
- SANDFORD, Sir D. K., 32, 128.
- Saturday evening, 263.
- Scenery, 28, 343.
- School Wynd Church, 59, 220, 317.
- Seceders, 61.
- Sensationalism, 275.
- Sermon outlines, 255, 264, 290, 298, 300, 301, 305, 311, 342, 350, 354, 359, 362, 367, 376, 378, 381.
- Shakespeare celebration, 382.
- Shelley, 93.
- Sin, Theory of, 137.
- Sinclair, Sir T., 435.
- "Sketches, Literary and Theological," 411.
- Smith, Alexander, 155, 159, 166, 169, 194, 195; success of his Poems, 200; "Dreamthorp," 292.
- Spinoza, Paper on, 293, 310.
- Stirling, Dr. Hutchison, on Gilfillan, 449.
- Stockton, 336.
- Stowe, Mrs., 79, 165.
- Strathearn, Ministers of, 428.
- Sunderland, 326, 370.
- Synod, The, 124.
- Tait's Magazine*, 69, 100.
- Tennyson, an artist, 150; "Idylls," 229.
- Tent-preachings, 26.
- Thackeray, 347.
- Thomson, James, 165.
- Truth, Love of, 294.
- Tulloch, Principal, 72, 208, 253.
- ULVERSTON, 236.
- Union of Free and United Presbyterian Churches, 277, 282, 371.
- Universal restoration, 145.
- VALLENTINE, Agnes, 70, 265.
- WEAVING, 4.
- Whewell's "Plurality of Worlds," 203.
- Wilson, Professor, 37, 38, 45, 147, 202.
- YENDYS, Sydney (Dobell), 182.
- Young, Rev. John, 380.
- ZULEIKA picture, 329.









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